DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 393 486 JC 960 181

AUTHOR Hankin, Joseph N., Ed.
TITLE The Community College: Opportunity and Access for America's First-Year Students. Monograph Series Number 19.
INSTITUTION South Carolina Univ., Columbia. National Resource Center for the Freshman Year Experience.
PUB DATE 96
NOTE 162p.
AVAILABLE FROM National Resource Center for the Freshman Year Experience and Students in Transition, 1728 College Street, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC 29208 ($30).
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070) -- Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120) -- Collected Works - General (020)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Achievement; Academic Advising; *Academic Persistence; Articulation (Education); *College Freshmen; *College Programs; *College Role; Community Colleges; Educational Administration; Educationally Disadvantaged; High Risk Students; School Holding Power; School Orientation; *Student Adjustment; Student Educational Objectives; Student Experience; *Student Needs; Transfer Policy; Transfer Programs; Two Year Colleges; Womens Education

ABSTRACT

Focusing on community colleges' role in enrolling students for their first year of postsecondary education, this monograph provides 17 essays on characteristics, programs, and outcomes related to students' freshman year. The following essays are included: (1) "The Freshman Year Experience: A Philosophy for Higher Education in the New Millennium," by Joseph N. Hankin and John N. Gardner; (2) "Promoting New Student Success in the Community College," by Beverly L. Bower; (3) "You Are Welcome Here: Research, Policy, and Programs for the American Community College Woman Student," by Helen Tina Feiger; (4) "A New Plan: Total Transfer Management," by Carey E. Harbin; (5) "Making the Connection Count: Articulation Between Community Colleges and Four-Year Colleges," by James C. Palmer; (6) "Building a Path: Orientation as the Critical Link to Student Success," by Les P. Cook; (7) "A Natural Marriage: The Extended Orientation Seminar and the Community College," by Joseph B. Cuseo and Betsy O. Barefoot; (8) "The Politics of Creating and Maintaining a College Success Course," by Douglas A. Kenny; (9) "Those Who Tempt Fate and Those Who Advise Them: Designing Strategies for Serving Underprepared Students," John E. Roueche and Suanne D. Roueche; (10) "The Way It Used To Be: 'New' Students and The Early Public Junior College," by Robert P. Pederson; (11) "Persistence and the First-Year Experience at the Community College: Teaching New Students to Survive, Stay, and Thrive," by Vincent Tinto; (12) "Teaching New Students at the Community College: A Unique Time in a Unique Setting," by Dennis McGrath; (13) "Academic Advising: Clearing a Path to Student Success," by Margaret C. King; (14) "Supplemental Instruction: Supporting the Classroom Experience," by Deanna C. Martin, Robert Blanc, and David R. Arendale; (15) "Learning Communities and Student Involvement in the Community College: Creating Environments of Inclusion and Success," by Vincent Tinto, Patricia E. Russo, and Stephanie Kadel-Taras; (16) "Holding the Line: A Comprehensive Plan for Retention," by D. David Conklin; and (17) "Visible Leadership: The Role of the Community College President in The Freshman Year Experience," by George B. Vaughn. (TGI)

ED 393 486

Monograph Series
Number 19

The Community College:
Opportunity and Access for America's First-Year Students

Joseph N. Hankin, Editor

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN **OTHER THAN PAPER COPY** HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

D. Fidler

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

The National Resource Center for
The Freshman Year Experience & Students in Transition
University of South Carolina, 1996

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

JC 960 181

Monograph Series
Number 19

The National Resource Center for The Freshman Year Experience & Students in Transition
Monograph Series

The Community College:
Opportunity and Access for America's First-Year Students

Joseph N. Hankin, Editor

The National Resource Center for
The Freshman Year Experience & Students in Transition
University of South Carolina, 1996

Additional copies of this monograph may be ordered for $30 each from the National Resource Center for The Freshman Year Experience and Students in Transition, 1728 College Street, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC 29208. Telephone (803) 777-6029. Telefax (803) 777-4699.

Special gratitude is expressed to Scott Stanton Bowen and Randolph F. Handel, Assistant Editors at the Resource Center, for editing, proofing, layout, and design; to Dr. Betsy Barefoot, the Resource Center's Co-Director for Research and Publications; and to Dr. Dorothy S. Fidler, the Center's Senior Managing Editor.

Copyright 1996 by the University of South Carolina. All rights reserved.
No part of this work may be reproduced or copied in any form, by any means, without written permission from the University of South Carolina

The Freshman Year Experience® and The First-Year Experience® are trademarks of the University of South Carolina. A license may be granted upon written request to use these terms. This license is not transferable without the written approval of the University of South Carolina.

Table of Contents

Foreword v
by John N. Gardner

Chapter 1 1
The Freshman Year Experience:
A Philosophy for Higher Education
in the New Millennium
Joseph N. Hankin & John N. Gardner

Chapter 2 11
Promoting New Student Success
In the Community College
Beverly L. Bower

Chapter 3 19
You Are Welcome Here:
Research, Policy, and Programs
for the American Community
College Woman Student
Helen Tina Feiger

Chapter 4 29
A New Plan:
Total Transfer Management
Carey E. Harbin

Chapter 5 37
Making the Connection Count:
Articulation Between Community Colleges
and Four-Year Colleges
James C. Palmer

Chapter 6 49
Building a Path: Orientation as the
Critical Link to Student Success
Les P. Cook

Chapter 7 59
A Natural Marriage:
The Extended Orientation Seminar
and the Community College
Joseph B. Cuseo & Betsy O. Barefoot

Chapter 8 69
The Politics of Creating and
Maintaining a College
Success Course
Douglas A. Kenny

Chapter 9 77
Those Who Tempt Fate and Those
Who Advise Them: Designing
Strategies for Serving
Underprepared Students
John E. Roueche & Suanne D. Roueche

Chapter 10 85
The Way It Used to Be:
"New" Students and
The Early Public Junior College
Robert P. Pederson

Chapter 11 97
Persistence and the First Year Experience
at the Community College: Teaching New
Students to Survive, Stay, and Thrive
Vincent Tinto

Chapter 12 105
Teaching New Students at the
Community College:
A Unique Time in a Unique Setting
Dennis McGrath

Chapter 13 115
Academic Advising: Clearing a
Path to Student Success
Margaret C. King

Chapter 14 123
Supplemental Instruction:
Supporting the Classroom Experience
Deanna C. Martin, Robert Blanc, & David R. Arendale

Chapter 15 135
Learning Communities and Student
Involvement in the Community
College: Creating Environments of
Inclusion and Success
Vincent Tinto, Patricia E. Russo, & Stephanie Kadel-Taras

Chapter 16 143
Holding the Line:
A Comprehensive Plan for Retention
D. David Conklin

Chapter 17 151
Visible Leadership: The Role of
the Community College President
in The Freshman Year Experience
George B. Vaughan

The Authors 159

Foreword

by John N. Gardner

This monograph is a long overdue expression of collegiality, respect, and partnership between the National Resource Center for The Freshman Year Experience and Students in Transition and thousands of colleagues in higher education who work in the approximately 1,400 community and two-year colleges across the country. Since our Center was founded in 1987, we have always invited the input of our colleagues in the two-year sector in the work of our Center. Unquestionably, the two-year sector now sees the majority of America's new college students enter for the first time and often go on to transfer to a baccalaureate-level school. This monograph is a salute to the essential work of the educators who are the teachers of these five-and-a-half million-plus students each year in America's community colleges.

This monograph is also a product of a partnership between the University of South Carolina and Westchester Community College (WCC) that dates back to the mid-1980s. During that period, our faculty and staff who have been involved with the University 101 first-year seminar here at University of South Carolina shared their expertise with faculty and staff at WCC to assist them in the launching of their version of a first-year seminar. A decade later WCC has gained a wealth of experience in adapting the concept of the first-year seminar to its unique student population. In the process of working with WCC in this effort, we came to have a friendship with one of America's most esteemed community college educators and presidents, Joseph Hankin. He has provided leadership for his institution for nearly 30 years. During that time, he has also taught hundreds of graduate students and future community college teachers and leaders at Columbia University Teachers College. President Hankin also was a co-host for a special conference our Center organized in 1988 to focus exclusively on the nature of the first-year experience in the American community college.

This series of National Resource Center monographs dates to 1987. We have attempted to focus on many significant, unique, and important topics within the larger subject of the American first-year experience. A special publication, then, on the nature of the first-year experience in the community college has been much needed. And we know of no better partner to provide editorial leadership for this publication than President Hankin. This work is a result of his leadership, recruitment of chapter authors, and many hours of editorial labor. So in addition to saluting our colleagues in community colleges, we salute President Hankin for his perseverance, collegiality, and vision that made this monograph possible. We hope that you will read and enjoy this publication and be moved to

some kind of productive action for the sake of your school and your students.

I wish to thank also my two senior editors here in the National Resource Center, Drs. Dorothy Fidler and Betsy Barefoot, for their outstanding contributions to the production of this monograph. We at the Center are all committed to further ventures with faculty and administrators in community colleges to strengthen the first-year experience in American higher education, and we are indebted to many of you for demonstrating to us in the baccalaureate sector a way to better serve America's first-year students.

Chapter 1

The Freshman Year Experience: A Philosophy for Higher Education in the New Millennium

Joseph N. Hankin & John N. Gardner

The Freshman Year Experience is a philosophy for assimilating new students into the college environment. It is an underlying set of assumptions about how first-year students should be regarded, treated, taught, and supported by an institution. Because some 54% of all first-time, full-time college students in America start their academic careers in community colleges, we explore in this volume the extent to which the Freshman Year Experience already exists, or should exist, in community colleges across the country.

However programs and implementation may differ from two- to four-year schools, first-year students at either sort of school are comparable and therefore may be served universally by the philosophy espoused here. A new study prepared under the auspices of the National Center for Postsecondary Teaching, Learning, and Assessment, a federally financed research center at The Pennsylvania State University, tracked 2,685 freshman students at 23 colleges and universities in 16 states (National Center, 1995, p. 26). Tests completed in the fall of 1992 and the spring of 1993 were designed to measure reading comprehension, mathematical ability, and critical thinking skills. The principal researchers concluded that most colleges, two- and four-year, with the "exception of a small number of the elite liberal arts colleges . . . do essentially the same thing"; that is, students at community colleges had scores similar to their counterparts at most four-year colleges. Despite the fact that the community colleges are thought to be less selective, students in them did as well as those in the more selective sector. Ernest Pascarella, as well as his coauthors in the study — Louise Bohr, of Northeastern University, Amaury Nora, of the University of Illinois at Chicago, and Patrick Terenzini, of The Pennsylvania State University — speculated that the reason may be the community colleges' emphasis on professors' teaching, in contrast to the focus on research at major universities. The investigators followed the students through their sophomore year and retested them, but that data is still under analysis.

Here we wish to focus not on the problems of the first-year experience at community colleges but on the solutions to these problems and on the ways the philosophy that is The Freshman Year Experience makes for an all around better undergraduate experience. We take to heart the dictum espoused by Louis Gerstner, the Chief Executive Officer of Nabisco: "No more prizes for predicting rain; prizes only for building arks." What is offered here is practical information. Not only do we have studies and analyses of The Freshman

Year Experience listed in the bibliographies and in several of the chapters, but throughout the monograph 57 community colleges in 25 states, and seven state systems of community colleges are listed as examples of where the philosophy is actually applied (see the Appendix to this chapter).

This present chapter is divided into three parts designed to move the reader from theory to practice. First, we look at the terminology of The Freshman Year Experience as it might apply to the community college, examine how students at community colleges differ from their counterparts at four-year institutions, and look at institutional differences between these two types of colleges in America. Next, we offer a comprehensive definition of The Freshman Year Experience. Finally, we give the reader a preview of the organization of the rest of the monograph.

A Look at the Terminology

Is there any such thing as The Freshman Year Experience in the community college, or should there be? Let us look at the terminology itself and the inherent concepts of the fresh/man/year experience and apply those concepts to students in the community college:

- Community college students are not "fresh," in the sense that they are new to higher education and lack life experience. They are, in fact, more likely to be older students, often with prior college experience.
- They are also less likely to be male, and are, in fact, predominately female.
- Many do not complete the experience in a year. They do not complete one quarter of the baccalaureate degree or one half of the associate degree in one year because large numbers of them are not enrolled full time.

In addition, community college students are likely to differ from students at four-year institutions in the following ways:

- Community college students are not necessarily degree seeking (Otuya & Mitchell, 1994). In fact, they may be there just for a year and transfer to a four-year institution, or for certification of some kind for continuing education, for enrichment in retirement, or for vocational (re)training.
- Because few community colleges have residence halls, virtually all community college students live off-campus, often at home.
- Students are more likely to be married or divorced, and to have children.
- Many students want training for a specific job — a practical education.
- Because they are older, students are generally less well prepared academically and therefore need more help with basic study skills.
- Students are more likely to be in conflict with someone about the fact that they are in college (conflicts with spouse, significant other, children, boss). In general, they come less prepared, less sure of themselves academically, less venturesome, and more willing to trust authority than to rely on themselves.

Institutional Differences Between Community Colleges and Four-Year Colleges

- In the community college there is often more visible influence of the secondary school culture. For example, on some campuses, the presence of bells to announce class change, lockers, lounges restricted to faculty, and, most importantly, far more evidence of local control all resemble high school.
- Community colleges are newer institutions, and perhaps less constrained by tradition.
- Community colleges are public — hence, secular.

Some community colleges have less development of the student personnel service profession. This has great implications for student support and for getting students involved in co-curricular activities. This difference is explained by several factors:

- Community college campuses do not have graduate degree granting programs in student personnel or higher education administrative services, and therefore do not have a complement of graduate students as inexpensive student support personnel.

- Community colleges have very frequently been an outgrowth of former public school districts which do not necessarily subscribe to the student personnel philosophy of holistic education. This factor of less sophistication in student personnel services at community colleges is a very important difference because on many of the baccalaureate campuses, the impetus for The Freshman Year Experience reform movement came originally from student personnel services and because of the critical partnership between academic affairs and student affairs.

- The faculty in community colleges often live in the community and are more likely to come from the community, so they may have a better understanding of the community pressures and characteristics.

- Faculty and administrators in community colleges are not usually graduates of community colleges. Instead, they are more likely to have had traditional residential college experiences themselves.

- Despite the inclusion of a segment of general education in virtually every program, a smaller percentage of the community college curriculum is tied to the liberal arts than is the case in four-year institutions.

- Community college classes are more likely to be smaller than classes at public four-year institutions.

- Community colleges make frequent use of adjunct professors.

- Admissions in community colleges is, by and large, less selective, except to a few specific curricula such as the health sciences.

- Community colleges are generally less expensive for students to attend.

- Faculty at community colleges are more likely to be rewarded for good teaching than their counterparts in four-year schools.

- Advising and counseling are more likely to be done by student affairs officers in some kind of counseling center, and less likely to be done by faculty. Admittedly, many community colleges are unionized, and advising is done by counselors who do have faculty rank. However, they are still less likely to be faculty in the classic sense of traditional classroom teaching faculty.

- In the community college, there is usually a greater consensus about the institutional mission.

- In the community college, authority is more centralized and, hence, does not have the mass decentralization found in a large research university with its collegiate fiefdoms.

- It may be harder to develop a common institutional culture in the community college due to the enormous diversity of student backgrounds with fewer shared rituals and customs (e.g., intercollegiate athletics), plus the constant scattering of community members due to commuting.

- In the community college the primary allegiance of the faculty is to their teaching, students, and institution and much less to their disciplinary affiliations, unlike in the four-year sector.

What is "The Freshman Year Experience"?

Although the term *The Freshman Year Experience* is often used to describe a particular program to increase learning and success of first-year students, that is not what is meant by the authors of this chapter. Instead, we argue that The Freshman Year Experience is a philosophy for assimilating new students into the college environment. The term has also been commonly used to describe freshman orientation courses and freshman seminars which have existed in American higher education since 1888.

The community college is predominantly a 20th century phenomenon, but it has been a "quick learner" and an "early adopter" of innovative processes in higher education. Community college students are also overwhelmingly "first generation" students; thus there is a great need for The Freshman Year Experience at their schools.

Essential Themes

When The Freshman Year Experience is regarded as a concept, a philosophy underlying programs to assist freshman success, what is meant by this philosophy? What are the commonalities in these Freshman Year Experience programs?

First of all, Freshman Year Experience programs are based on an attempt by institutions to define freshman success comprehensively. Upcraft and Gardner (1987) in their review of first-year reform initiatives offer the following definition of freshman success: developing academic and intellectual competence, establishing and maintaining interpersonal relationships, developing personal identity, deciding on a career and lifestyle, maintaining personal health and wellness, and developing an integrated philosophy of life.

The Freshman Year Experience is a deliberately designed attempt to provide a rite of passage in which the students are supported, welcomed, celebrated, and ultimately assimilated. It represents an effort to reverse a several hundred year tradition of harassing new arrivals through intimidating rites of passage which were designed to enforce group cohesion through oppressive techniques known in American higher education as "hazing" which is now illegal in most states.

Freshman Year Experience programs are analogous to the kind of "basic training" that has been provided by the United States armed forces for decades and simultaneously most of America's major corporations for an equal amount of time. In this so-called basic training, the idea is to teach new members of the group the organization's history, customs, traditions, language, folkways, mores, norms, power structure, significant leaders, rules, regulations, programs, services and, in general, establish patterns for upward mobility and success.

Freshman Year Experience programs are also designed to convey a great deal of respect for new students *per se* in contrast to the historic contempt and disdain initially directed towards the newest arrivals on college campuses.

The Freshman Year Experience is equally manifested in a variety of mechanisms designed to guarantee for each entering new student a significant contact, such as a caring adult employee of the institution. This would be found in mentoring programs, academic advising programs, freshman seminar programs, as well as various types of tutoring and counseling approaches.

The Freshman Year Experience is a philosophy which involves the notion of intentionality. Institutions set deliberate goals for the freshman year and devise intentional strategies to help freshmen achieve these goals. The idea is to leave freshman success neither to serendipity nor to chance.

The Freshman Year Experience also includes making a systematic study and effort to identify the variables that interfere with freshman success and then designing programs to address these variables. For example, in recent years, Freshman Year Experience programs have been much more concerned with health and wellness issues, especially sexually transmitted diseases. Clearly, these are variables that interfere with new student success, and educational programs are being designed to counteract these variables.

The Freshman Year Experience is a philosophy which leads to the establishment of mechanisms designed to assist employees detecting potential dropouts and intervening to provide attention, support, and counseling for at-risk students. The programs are characterized generically as "early warning programs."

The Freshman Year Experience also stresses making positive predictions for new student success. The relationship between transmission of expectations by professors and positive student learning outcomes in response is well established. This is another illustration of how The Freshman Year Experience philosophy is attempting to reverse a historic tradition in

which the opposite was predicted for students, a tradition typified by the decades-old axiom: "Look to your left and look to the right. The two students you looked at will not be here at the end of the year."

The Freshman Year Experience also encourages the development of new structures for communication between freshman educators and students so that the educators are able to validate their assumptions about student backgrounds and characteristics by direct experience rather than stereotyped perceptions. One of the consequences of the 50-year period of growth in American higher education between World War II and the present has been a gradual movement of faculty away from many students, especially first-year students. The Freshman Year Experience movement, in part, is designed to get educators back in touch with the realities of the student experience.

The Freshman Year Experience, to borrow from the study *Involvement in Learning* (National Institute of Education, 1984), is an illustration of the concept of "frontloading" which argues that the overall educational experience for undergraduate students will be improved by reallocation of precious institutional resources from the upper divisions to the freshman and sophomore years.

The Freshman Year Experience is a concept that institutions are marketing in advance in an attempt to sell the institution to prospective students and their parents. The freshman year is described extensively, for example, in the "view books" of many colleges. After matriculation, The Freshman Year Experience is subsequently a deliberate series of experiences which are provided for the students. This is the time when many educators believe that students make a second critical decision (the first one being to attend in the first place), whether or not to stay or leave the institution they chose originally. In marketing terms, this is the concept of the "second sale" in which the institutions are trying to help students overcome "buyer's remorse" and make a commitment to remain at the institution. This kind of intervention, the reselling of the institution, appears to be particularly important during the first six weeks or so of the first term of the freshman year, the time during which the majority of students who ultimately drop out, (Tinto, 1987) make that decision.

Freshman Year Experience programs are based on the fact that not all freshmen are the same. Therefore, they have a variety of special needs for orientation, support, and programs due to the heterogeneity of their backgrounds.

The Freshman Year Experience is based on the recognition that the freshman year is the foundation on which the rest of the college experience is based. Some institutions are now beginning to link this foundation to the desired outcomes of the undergraduate experience, those outcomes described as the Senior Year Experience (Hartel, Schwartz, Blume, & Gardner, 1994).

Another essential component of The Freshman Year Experience is the necessity of, in the language of Continuous Quality Improvement, presenting The Freshman Year Experience to the internal customers (i.e., the employees of the institution) to help college and university employees understand the needs, challenges, problems, hopes, dreams, and fears of new students (the external customers), and to help them satisfactorily respond to student expectations and needs.

A very important component of The Freshman Year Experience is the necessity to develop a campus-wide approach to increasing new student success. This involves making the first year a top priority of institutional leaders, especially the president and the chief academic officer. Illustrations of this idea are campuses where, for example, presidents and chief academic officers are actually involved in teaching first-year students or participating in orientation, mentoring programs, and teaching freshman seminar courses.

An extremely important component of student success is the essential partnership of academic affairs and student affairs personnel with the senior faculty of the institution.

Another way of understanding The Freshman Year Experience is to look at it as the uniquely

American concept of "support groups." Support groups are designed for persons whose lives are in transition, such as those who, for example, must deal with separation and divorce, cope with an illness, move to a new community, deal with being laid-off from long-term employment, and matriculate at a college. Support groups are, by definition, led by survivors of the same transitional experience (Aslanian, 1980). Individuals are more successful in making major life transitions if they are members of support groups, such as Freshman Year Experience programs (Fidler, 1991).

The Freshman Year Experience is based on a belief in a holistic approach to education which attempts to educate students by addressing all of the aspects of student development including the academic, social, personal, physical, and spiritual dimensions of learning, growth, and change during the college years.

The Freshman Year Experience also attempts to respond to students developmentally on their time table when they are ready and able to learn. For example, this may mean that students must be taught study skills repeatedly during the first term in college, especially after having failed their first midterm examination when they may be more motivated to learn new study skills.

The Freshman Year Experience philosophy has also produced the realization that concern for new students and the achievement of professional status need not necessarily be incompatible. In turn, this requires either the modification or the rejection of the graduate school model which most faculty have learned whereby status is measured in terms of one's distance from freshmen. Institutions with new student experience programs have had to make an effort to develop a reward system to sanction positively those who care for freshmen and to make a concomitant commitment to put some of their best people forward on behalf of freshmen.

And finally, in recent years, The Freshman Year Experience has been linked to the notion of advocacy to recognize, reward, and celebrate those campus leaders, change agents, and good citizens who have taken special and sometimes courageous strides on behalf of serving new students.

What This Monograph Offers

From the theoretical and professional point-of-view of the authors of this monograph, there is no such thing as *the* community college — an ultimate archetype of such a school.

In Chapters 2 and 3, Beverly Bower and Tina Feiger respectively make clear that no monolithic attribution may be given to either students of color or women. Each group is a complex of individual traits and personalities and must be educated as such — on a person-to-person basis. Beverly Bower paints a beautiful picture of the mosaic of minority freshmen in the community college, and points the way more and more community college students will be proceeding in the near future.

Tremendous increases in the numbers of female students over the past two decades in higher education began first in the nation's community colleges. As Tina Feiger points out, these women have had the pervasive effect of encouraging colleges to bring about progressive changes in regard to the needs of female students, changes such as campus women's centers, day care for the children of these students, and rape crisis centers.

The author of Chapter 4, Carey Harbin, is a counselor who designed and implemented a community college orientation course and who continues to coordinate the resulting program today. "Total Transfer Management," the concept that all students are potential transfer students, is the result of his experience in helping students to persist in the community college and go on to matriculate at four-year institutions.

James Palmer focuses in Chapter 5 on community college articulation with four-year institutions by looking at it from four different perspectives: that of the student, the state, the academic disciplines, and the individual institutions — perspectives that must be understood if first-year students are to transfer successfully if they so desire.

Les Cook, in Chapter 6, focuses on linking orientation to the mission of the institution in assisting students and their families to adjust to a new social environment. He details the components of the process, giving specific institutional examples to reinforce the theoretical underpinnings of orientation.

Joseph Cuseo and Betsy Barefoot have done a masterful job of summarizing the case for the extended orientation seminar in the community college. Based on the research literature, as well as a survey completed in 1994 (to which 350 community colleges responded), they detail in Chapter 7 the effects of such seminars in two-year and community colleges, especially as they relate to persistence and degree completion. The prescribed content of such an experience may be used as a blueprint for those institutions considering initiating a similar endeavor.

In Chapter 8, Doug Kenny, a former administrator and current teacher of a Community College Success Course in The Freshman Year Experience, lends this volume his academic and political expertise in devising, selling, establishing, and implementing a course which captures many of the elements discussed in other chapters. The case study helps the reader avoid the pitfalls and anticipate the problems associated with starting such a program in an academic climate that may be resistant to the introduction of something new and nontraditional.

John and Suanne Roueche, in Chapter 9 have written on the subject of remediation for underprepared students for decades. The difficulties in clarifying the subject are great; the Roueches point out that no fewer than forty terms have been used to name these programs. Many of the tenets of a good program in remediation may be found in good Freshman Year Experience programs.

Robert P. Pedersen makes it clear in Chapter 10 that even the historical precedents of our two-year institutions are, at the least, bifurcated, and most certainly misunderstood by even the best informed community college advocates. To correct the historical record, he challenges community college history as it is commonly told. As he points out, the constant in these institutions is their philosophy: They shape themselves to their environments, to the changing conditions about them.

Vincent Tinto is well known as a researcher and theorist of higher education. No discussion of persistence may be had without including some of his insights. As he points out in Chapter 11, early research has focused primarily on four-year institutions, but that imbalance has been rectified. Tinto asserts that, "As attention has shifted to the experience of community college students and the task of enhancing their persistence, so too has it turned to the importance of the freshman year experience."

How do student learning needs in the community college differ from those in the four-year institution? Dennis McGrath, known for his work on writing across the curriculum, change and resistance, and staff development, turns to this subject in Chapter 12. He, too, views community colleges not as monolithic institutions and asserts that each one faces the tasks of initiation, social and academic integration, cultural translation, transfer, and articulation in differing ways.

In Chapter 13, Margaret (Peggy) King, past president of the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA), details the process of academic advising in which the student interacts with concerned members of the college family. She presents this process as the hub of a wheel, with supporting service "spokes" projecting in many directions and providing academic and social integration which lead to student success, persistence, and satisfaction.

In Chapter 14, three university educators, Deanna Martin, Robert Blanc, and David Arendale, wrestle with student difficulty in adjusting to the college environment, students' academic and social difficulties, the incongruence between student expectations and institutional demands, and the feeling of social isolation which many students new to the academic enterprise have. Much of their chapter deals with the program of Supplemental Instruction, almost two decades old, at the University of Missouri – Kansas City which has addressed these problems.

Vincent Tinto appears again in this volume along with two colleagues, Pat Russo and Stephanie Kadel-Taras, in Chapter 15, to discuss the subject of retention, and also to address the oft-discussed concept of learning communities and collaborative learning strategies as ways of involving the student. These authors focus on a particular institution to show how these concepts are actually applied in practice, and how success does not come overnight in reforming college communities.

David Conklin, a current community college president, details in Chapter 16 a comprehensive plan for retention which was carried out in an institution at which he had a long residence. He writes his chapter from the perspective of "having been there," and his advice may lead to methods for decreasing attrition.

In Chapter 17, George Vaughan, a former community college president and current university professor and administrator of a community college leadership program, provides us with insights about the leadership needed in establishing The Freshman Year Experience through specific examples from various colleges. He focuses on ways to establish a good campus climate and the introduction of change to campus culture.

This is a practical monograph that stresses "take-home value." It assesses various global elements of the community college, but mainly focuses on the importance of The Freshman Year Experience as it specifically affects the first-time community college student. These so-called "Democracy's Colleges" are likely to continue to educate the majority of first-time, full-time freshmen, hence the importance of this volume.

References

Aslanian, C. B. (1980). *Americans in transition: Life changes as reasons for adult learning*. New York: College Entrance Examination Board.

Fidler, P. (1991). Relationship of freshman orientation seminars to sophomore return rates. *Journal of The Freshman Year Experience, 3*(1), 7-38.

Hartel, W. C., Schwartz, S. W., Blume, S. D., & Gardner, J. N. (1994). *Ready for the real world*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

National Center on Postsecondary Teaching, Learning, and Assessment. (1995). *Realizing the potential: Improving postsecondary teaching, learning, and assessment*. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University.

National Institute of Education. (1984). *Involvement in learning: Realizing the potential of American higher education*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

Otuya, E., & Mitchell, A. (1994). Today's college students: Varied characteristics by sector. *Research Briefs, 5*(1). Washington, DC: Division of Policy Analysis and Research, American Council on Education.

Tinto, V. (1987). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Upcraft, M. L., & Gardner, J. N. (1987). *The freshman year experience: Helping students survive and succeed in college*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Appendix

Specific Institutions Cited as Examples in this Volume

(Schools are listed by state, then identified with the number of the chapter in which they are cited.)

Arizona
- South Mountain Community College 9

California
- Butte College 6
- California State University System 5
- Chaffey College 10
- DeAnza College 9
- Glendale Community College 14
- Santa Barbara City College 9
- Santa Monica College 3
- Taft College 10

Florida
- Florida's Community Colleges 5
- Miami-Dade Community College 2, 6, 9
- Seminole Community College 9

Illinois
- Chicago City Colleges 10
- Highland Community College 14
- Illinois Central College 9
- Illinois Community Colleges 5
- Joliet Junior College 10
- Lincoln Land Community College 14
- Moraine Valley Community College 9
- Triton College 9
- William Rainey Harper College 6

Indiana
- Indiana Vocational Technical Colleges 5

Kansas
- Cowley County Community College 9
- Fort Scott Community College 10
- Independence Community College 10
- Johnson County Community College 6
- Kansas City
  - Kansas Community College 17

Kentucky
- Ashland Community College 17

Maryland
- Anne Arundel Community College 14

Massachusetts
- Middlesex Community College 9

Michigan
- Muskegon Community College 6

Missouri
- University of Missouri-Kansas City 14

New Jersey
- Mercer County
  - Community College 16
- Montclair State College 5

New Mexico
- Santa Fe Community College 9

New York
- Adirondack Community College 9
- Borough of Manhattan
  - Community College 5
- Hunter College 5
- LaGuardia Community College 2
- Onondaga Community College 14
- Suffolk County Community College 9
- Westchester Community College 8

Ohio
- Sinclair Community College 14
- The University of Toledo
  - Community and Technical College 9

Oregon
- Linn-Benton Community College 14

Pennsylvania
- Community College of
  - Allegheny County 6
- Community College of Philadelphia 12

South Carolina
- Midlands Technical College 9

Texas
- Austin Community College 2, 9
- Houston Community Colleges 5

University of Houston 5
Midland College 9
North Lake College 9
Utah
Salt Lake City Community College 6
Virginia
Blue Ridge Community College 17
Lord Fairfax Community College 9, 17
Thomas Nelson Community College 17
Virginia Community College System 5
Washington
Seattle Central Community College 15
Wisconsin .....
Milwaukee Area Technical College 14
London, England
Kingston University 14

Chapter 2

Promoting New Student Success In the Community College

Beverly L. Bower

Every minority freshman in the community college is a mosaic, a mosaic of individual traits, individual histories, and ethnic sociocultural background. Each brings to the community college a particular set of needs emerging from his or her unique makeup. The variety and complexity of these needs present a tremendous challenge to the community college as it adapts to the changing face of our nation.

Since the 1980s demographers have been clearly pointing out the coming change in ethnic makeup of our country. Works such as *All One System* (Hodgkinson, 1985) and *One Third of a Nation* (Commission on Minority Participation, 1988) have brought to our attention the changing composition of America's population. The minority population continues to grow at a much faster rate than the majority population. Projections by the U.S. Bureau of the Census estimate that by the year 2000 the U.S. Hispanic population will increase by 46%, African-American and other minority populations by 23%, and the White population by 10%; however, educational gains of most minority populations have not kept pace with the projected demographic changes.

Higher education's pool of available individuals is increasingly composed of minorities. Although total minority enrollment was at an all–time high in the fall of 1991, the American Council on Education stated that minority groups continue to be underrepresented on American campuses (Evangelauf, 1993), and the most recent figures available show that African-American, Hispanic, and Native-American students continue to be less likely than White students to complete a bachelor's degree ("Educational Attainment," 1993).

Overall American college enrollment grew 4.9% from 1990 to 1992 with most of this growth occurring in two-year institutions where enrollment increased by 9.2%. As in the 1980s, minority students continue to be more likely than White students to attend two-year colleges, with 57% of Hispanics, 54% of Native-American, 43% of African-American, and 41% of Asian students enrolled in two-year colleges in 1992 compared to 38% of White college students (Almanac, 1994). These percentages have remained fairly steady over the last ten years. Few of these community college minority students go on to attend or graduate from a baccalaureate institution, evidenced by their receiving only 17% of the associate degrees awarded that same year while constituting approximately 26% of the total community college enrollment. This phenomenon,

known in the higher education literature as the "leaking pipeline" has been discussed in numerous works (e.g., Astin, 1982; Richardson & Bender, 1987; Tinto, 1987).

The clustering of minority students in two–year institutions may be attributed to a number of factors, including proximity, low cost, the open-access policy, and social accessibility of community colleges. Whatever the reasons, the presence of large numbers of minority students in community colleges makes the issue of minority student achievement an important issue for these institutions.

Numerous writings have called upon American higher education to revitalize its efforts to improve minority participation. Indeed, at least three major higher education associations have taken leadership roles in calling for increasing minority participation and success in higher education. The American Council on Education has published several significant reports on the topic, including *One Third of a Nation* (Commission on Minority Participation, 1988), and *Minorities on Campus: A Handbook for Enhancing Diversity* (Green, 1989), as well as an annual series published by the American Council on Education (1982-1996). The Education Commission of the States, which joined with American Council on Education to create the Commission on Minority Participation in Education and American Life, has also produced a number of relevant studies including *Focus on Minorities: Trends in Higher Education Participation and Success* (Mingle, 1987), and *Achieving Campus Diversity: Policies for Change* (National Task Force, 1990).

The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), too, has been involved with generating reports and initiatives designed to address minority participation in higher education. Minority concerns have ranked among the top priorities for both the President's Academy and the AACC Board. In 1988 the AACC published *Minorities in Urban Community Colleges: Tomorrow's Students Today* (Urban Community Colleges Commission, 1988), and in 1990 established the Commission to Improve Minority Education which published in 1993 its action report, *Making Good on Our Promises . . . Moving Beyond Rhetoric to Action* (Commission to Improve Minority Education, 1993). The reports set forth action agendas on the national, state, and institutional levels. The agendas were based on the components the Commission felt were necessary for successful minority inclusion at all levels: commitment, policy, information, leadership, and collaboration (Commission to Improve Minority Education, 1993). Unstated, but at the root of any agenda designed to improve participation of any group in higher education, is an understanding of the general characteristics and needs of that group.

Understanding and meeting the needs of minority community college students may be a complicated undertaking. First one must define "minority." This term, which has become somewhat controversial in our increasingly sensitive society, most commonly (and for the basis of this discussion) refers to the following ethnic groups: African American, Hispanic, Native American, and Asian American. Each of these groups has unique cultural histories and circumstances. Depending on geographical location, one or two minority groups may predominate.

But ethnic status alone does not explain the unique needs of minority students in community colleges. When they enter the community college most minority freshmen will also bring with them one or more "at–risk" characteristics common among the general community college student population, including poor academic background, low self–concept, and being a first-generation student in college (Jones & Watson, 1990; Smedley, Myers, & Harrell, 1993). It is the interplay of this variety of factors (topped with general freshman angst) that results in the small number of community college minority students who successfully complete community college programs, receive their associate's degree, and move on to baccalaureate institutions. With the disproportionate clustering of minority students in community colleges, these institutions are under considerable pressure to find ways to increase the retention and academic success of this group.

As stated previously, minority college students are subject to stress from a number of sources. Studies have investigated the stresses placed on

minority students who attend majority institutions. With certain exceptions (some urban and special purpose institutions), most community colleges may be considered majority institutions. Research on minority college students has produced a variety of ways to view student–college interactions. Smedley, Myers, and Harrell (1993) identify three sets of factors that influence minority college student adjustment and achievement: (a) individual attributes that relate to student vulnerability to academic failure (e.g., academic preparation, intelligence, social maturity); (b) psychological and sociocultural stresses (e.g., stresses that are experienced on campus); and (c) coping strategies students use. In their study of minority college freshmen, they found that sociocultural stresses play a significant role in the adaptation of minority freshmen and that minority status pressures place increased demands on students' coping resources. These minority status pressures were "experienced as heightened concerns over their academic preparedness, questions about their legitimacy as students . . . perceptions of negative expectations . . . and concerns over parental/family expectations" (Smedley, Myers, & Harrell, 1993, p. 447).

In research done over the years, Sedlacek (1987) demonstrated the validity of eight noncognitive variables that are critical in the successful adjustment of minority students. These variables are:

1. Positive self-concept or confidence
2. Realistic self-appraisal
3. Understanding and dealing with racism
4. Demonstrated community service
5. Preferring long-range goals to short-term or immediate needs
6. Availability of a strong support person
7. Successful leadership experience
8. Knowledge required in a field (p. 485)

Several similar variables show up in a study of minority freshmen and fourth-year cohorts conducted by Bennett and Okinaka (1990). This study found that satisfaction with certain aspects of the college setting and college adjustment factors were important predictors of persistence among minority freshmen. Not only will many of the minority freshmen who attend community colleges experience difficulties related to their ethnic minority status, they must also face the challenges associated with being part of the at–risk student population. Many minority students are at risk because of social, academic, and economic challenges to their college success.

One of the characteristics prevalent among minority community college freshmen that puts them at risk in postsecondary education is being the first in their family to attend college. Studies have shown a correlation between parental education level and attrition (Jones & Watson, 1990), placing first-generation college students in the at-risk category. In their study of first-generation minority baccalaureate recipients from public institutions across the country, Richardson and Skinner (1992) found that more than half (60%) of their study's participants reported attending a community college. In their work, Richardson and Skinner (1992) have found that differences in opportunity orientation (reflected in motivation and goal setting), preparation, and mode of attendance (full- versus part-time) strongly influence the success of minority first-generation college students. These students are also likely to suffer from a lack of a role model or mentor for the college experience. The usefulness of such role models for the success of minority students has been discussed in a number of articles (Fiske, 1988; Richardson & Skinner, 1992; Sedlacek, 1987).

In addition, many minority freshmen come to the community college with weak academic preparation, the most cited reason for lack of achievement in higher education. Minority freshmen are more likely to come from inferior public schools where they were tracked into nonacademic courses that did not provide them with challenging educational experiences that would have helped develop the academic skills

they need to succeed in postsecondary education. These students experience disorientation and perceive gaps in their learning as they begin community college classes. As one student reports, "There were voids I had to go back and fill in" (Richardson & Skinner, 1992, p. 32).

The general economic condition of minorities in the United States results in many minority community college freshmen being at risk for successful college completion. According to government statistics nearly 50% of African Americans and 40% of Hispanics below the age of 18 live in poverty. This situation makes it much more likely that minority students will find the financial responsibility of attending college difficult to manage, even with the assistance of financial aid. Reports indicate that minority college students make up a much higher proportion of federal financial aid recipients than the proportion of all students they represent in the general college population (Nettles, 1991). While studies have shown the risk factor associated with economic disadvantage may be reduced with the presence of financial aid (Jones & Watson, 1990), recent changes in regulations have decreased the availability of financial aid. In addition, impoverished backgrounds and cultural expectations may not prepare minority students for effective money management.

Every minority community college freshman presents her or his own unique traits of minority-status, social, academic, and economic pressures as he or she enters the community college. Administrators, faculty, and staff are faced with the challenge of helping these students overcome this array of pressures to meet their academic goals successfully.

As they have pondered the institutional challenges presented by the increasing number of minority students in the educational pipeline, numerous authors have made recommendations and suggestions they believe will help community colleges rise to the challenge of serving minority community college students. Many of the recommendations, while targeted toward minority students, are ideas that may improve the success rate for all community college students.

Socialization is one theme which connects those recommendations that deal most directly with minority–status issues. Those who work with community college minority freshmen must realize that many minority families are unable to provide the support — moral, financial, or intellectual — that the student will need to survive in college. Some families may even feel threatened by a member's decision to attend college. To aid in helping build needed family support, community colleges should try to involve the student's family in the student's educational life (Rendon & Taylor, 1989; Ross, 1990).

The importance of role models and mentors also plays a significant part in the socialization of minority college students. The presence of such individuals has been discussed by many successful minority college graduates as an important key to their success. Many institutions are involved in programs designed to encourage mentoring relationships and provide appropriate role models for their minority students. Another aid to minority student socialization is the presence of minority groups (e.g., African-American Student Association, Latino Unidos) on community college campuses. Organizations of this type serve two socializing functions — they provide a network for minority students to interact within the campus community and, through their connection to the overall student government system, they provide another avenue for minority students to interact with and learn about the college environment and bond with the institution.

The educational attainment of not just minority community college students but of all community college students would be improved if community colleges successfully implement some of the recommendations suggested for addressing the needs of community college minority students. Numerous articles point to the need for improved counseling and advisement in the community college. Both the American Association of Community Colleges Commission to Improve Minority Education and the Education Commission of the States National Task Force for Minority Achievement in Higher Education include improvement of the

counseling and advisement function in their recommended agendas. Such activity could help minority college entrants focus on their goals. The importance of the relationship between goal clarity and achievement for minority students has been supported in a number of studies over the years.

Increasing collaborative efforts between community college and K–12 institutions, baccalaureate institutions, the local community, and business and industry have all been cited as ways of improving the academic success of minority students. Such collaborative relationships provide support for underprepared students. By creating a strong educational continuum, community colleges can establish contact with prospective students long before they apply for admission and aid the public school in preparing the student for higher education matriculation and graduation. Working with local businesses, community colleges can help potential minority students see more concretely the economic benefits of higher education by showcasing successful alumni employed in local businesses, participating in apprenticeship and tech–prep programs, and encouraging other positive college–business relationships. Providing special programs and services of this kind may create a bridge to success for underprepared minority students. However, improving counseling and advisement, and increasing collaborative efforts would benefit all community college students. As Rendon and Taylor (1989) state, "Minority initiatives are not self–serving issues. When community colleges institute the[se] kinds of initiatives . . . *all* students become winners" (pp. 22–23).

Community colleges interested in promoting the success of new minority students will need to be aware of the range of factors that may influence this group. Research has documented a number of stresses that can work against the success of this group, including minority–status stresses and other characteristics that put many minority community college freshmen at risk for failure to reach their educational goals. As shown by the poor retention and completion rates for minority community college students, many succumb to these pressures. By helping new minority students succeed, community colleges will become more economically productive communities by creating commitment to and involvement with the institution and its citizens. The economic future of our country depends on the ability of community colleges and other postsecondary institutions to meet this challenge.

Promoting Minority Student Success in the Community College: Exemplary Programs

Miami–Dade Community College, Florida

Miami–Dade Community College is a well–known example of successful inclusionary practices. In 1960, 82% of M–DCC students were White, and today only approximately 20% are. Throughout this dramatic demographic shift M–DCC has successfully managed to integrate diversity and pluralism into its policies and programs. Its formula for success, described by Roueche and Baker (1987) in *Access and Excellence*, has become a model for community colleges searching for ways to manage changing institutional climate successfully.

Included among M–DCC's minority efforts is the Black Student Opportunity Program. The goals of this program are to help local high schools adequately prepare African-American students for the pursuit of a college education and provide a financial head start in earning a college degree. Some of the program's objectives are to increase the pool of well–prepared high school graduates, especially low–income students; increase the number of high school students aspiring to a college education through more appropriate course selection, mentoring, role modeling, and external exposure; and to provide a higher level of college readiness among participants in the Black Student Opportunity Program (Commission to Improve Minority Education, 1993).

Austin Community College, Texas

In 1990–91, Austin Community College established its Minority Student Success Office. The program administered by this office was designed to increase the participation, retention, and transfer of African-American and Hispanic

students in the Austin Community College service area. As testified to at the hearings of the American Association of Community Colleges Commission to Improve Minority Education, this program has led to the development of a student mentor program in which Austin Community College students become role models for elementary school students and also build their own self confidence by working with these students. In addition the Minority Student Success Office sponsors programs to increase the cultural sensitivity of Austin Community College faculty and staff (Commission to Improve Minority Education, 1993).

La Guardia Community College, New York

The Middle College program of La Guardia Community College focuses its efforts on high-risk students. Only high-risk, tenth-grade students are recruited to this program which combines the concept of an alternative high school with a two–year college. Students in the program, which has a no–fail policy, take their next three years of school at the college. Through the program students receive tutoring, work experience, and career and personal counseling. The program has proven to have a positive impact with approximately 85% of its participants graduating from high school and 75% going on to college (Rendon & Matthews, 1989).

References

Almanac. (1994). *The Chronicle of Higher Education, 41*(1).

American Council on Education, Office of Minority Concerns. (1982-1996). *Minorities in higher education*. Washington, DC: Author.

Astin, A. W. (1982). *Minorities in American higher education: Recent trends, current prospects and recommendations*. San Francisco: Jossey–Bass.

Bennett, C., & Okinaka, A. M. (1990). Factors related to persistence among Asian, Black, Hispanic, and White undergraduates at a predominately White university: Comparison between first and fourth year cohorts.*The Urban Review*, 22(1), 33–60.

Commission on Minority Participation in Education and American Life. (1988). *One third of a nation*. Washington, DC: American Council on Education & Education Commission of the States.

Commission to Improve Minority Education. (1993). *Making good our promises . . . Moving beyond rhetoric to action*. Washington, DC: American Association of Community Colleges.

Educational Attainment of the U.S. Population. (1993, August 25). *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, p. 14.

Evangelauf, J. (1993, January 20). Number of minority students in college rose by 9% from 1990 to 1991, U.S. reports. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, pp. A30–A31.

Fiske, E. B. (1988). The undergraduate Hispanic experience: A case of juggling two cultures. *Change, 20*(3), 29–33.

Green, M. F. (Ed.). (1989). *Minorities on campus: A handbook for enhancing diversity*. Washington, DC: American Council on Education.

Hodgkinson, H. L. (1985). *All one system: Demographics of education, kindergarten through graduate school*. Washington, DC: Institute for Educational Leadership.

Jones, D. J., & Watson, B. C. (1990). *"High risk" students in higher education: Future trends*. ASHE– ERIC Higher Education Report No. 3. Washington, DC: The George Washington University, School of Education & Human Development.

Mingle, J. R. (1987). *Focus on minorities: Trends in higher education participation and success*. Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States and the State Higher Education Executive Officers.

National Task Force for Minority Achievement in Higher Education. (1990). *Achieving campus diversity: Policies for change*. Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States.

Nettles, M. T. (1991). *Assessing progress in minority access & achievement in American higher education*. Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States.

Rendon, L. I., & Matthews, T. B. (1989). Success of community college students: Current issues. *Education and Urban Society, 21*(3), 312-327.

Rendon, L. I., & Taylor, M. T. (1989). Hispanic students: Action for access. *AACJC Journal, 60*(3), 18–23.

Richardson, R. C., & Bender, L. W. (1987). *Fostering minority access and achievement in higher education: The role of urban community colleges and universities*. San Francisco: Jossey–Bass.

Richardson, R. C., & Skinner, E. F. (1992). Helping first–generation minority students achieve degrees. In L. S. Zwerling & H. B. London (Eds.), *First-generation students: Confronting the cultural issues*. New Directions for Community Colleges, No. 80. (pp. 29–43). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Ross, K. (1990). Eight myths about minorities in higher education. *College Board Review, 155*, 12–19, 45–47.

Roueche, J., & Baker, G. (1987). *Access and excellence*. Washington, DC: Community College Press.

Sedlacek, W. E. (1987). Black students on white campuses: 20 years of research. *Journal of College Student Personnel, 28*(6), 484–495.

Smedley, B. D., Myers H. F., & Harrell, S. P. (1993). Minority–status stresses and the college adjustment of ethnic minority freshmen. *Journal of Higher Education, 64*, 434–452.

Tinto, V. (1987). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Urban Community Colleges Commission. (1988). *Minorities in urban community colleges: Tomorrow's students today*. Washington, DC: American Association of Community Colleges.

Chapter 3

You Are Welcome Here: Research, Policy, and Programs for the American Community College Woman Student

Helen Tina Feiger

The number of women attending community colleges has increased over the last two decades because of the colleges' easy access, extensive student support services, locale, and low cost. More associate's degrees were awarded to women than to men by 1987, indicating the change in enrollment patterns of women in the community college. From 1969-70 women received 43% of the associate's degrees and almost two decades later, from 1986-1987, women received 56% of all the degrees awarded. Women now constitute the majority of credit students in American community colleges (Long & Blanchard, 1991). Although more young women than men graduated from high school, not until 1976 were as many young women enrolled in community colleges as men. The changing social conditions leading to this increase in college enrollment of women included an increasingly insecure economy, climbing divorce rate, and the rise of the women's movement. As practitioners in the community colleges we need to understand their experiences and base our programmatic decisions on sound information.

Women community college students have not just increased in numbers but they have become increasingly diversified. Women come to our colleges at different life stages, with varying and often extensive outside responsibilities including work and families. They come from a multitude of ethnic and personal backgrounds. They are a diverse group with diverse issues and concerns, and they need a variety of services at a community college. This chapter will review some of the research that demonstrates this diversity and will provide an example of one institution at which practitioners created many different academic programs and student services in response to the diversity of its women student population.

Review of Related Literature

The growing body of theory and research relative to women students is instructive because it illustrates for us that community college women come from a variety of life stages with corresponding developmental issues and a host of extensive family responsibilities. Going to college may raise a tough personal dilemma for mature women students, especially those with families, that requires some sensitivity on the part of the college staff. In fact, Boland Hamill, Hale, MacKinnon, and Waldron (1994) showed that personal beliefs and values directly affected the GPA of women in higher education. They

found that women who believed there were benefits for their children if they worked had higher GPAs overall in college than those who felt there were fewer benefits to their children from working. In other words, going to work and going to college have many meanings to women, especially those with children. Women's very beliefs about sex roles and expectations are challenged by going to work and going to college. Their subsequent college GPAs may then be affected as well. College staff, while needing to be sensitive to the personal meanings of going to college, also need to encourage women to succeed and complete their academic goals. Ultimately, women must remain competitive and be able to secure well-paying jobs for their own survival and success.

Gilbert (1980) in her study of inter-role conflict in reentry students found that beliefs about familial role demands were the basis of their experience of conflict. None of the men who were fathers mentioned familial demands as a source of conflict. Today, however, given further social changes, these results may be different.

Smallwood (1980) looked at 32 community college women and "problem intensity." Their major concerns were coordinating childcare, job/career acquisition, interpersonal relationships, and need for financial or legal aid. The study found that women first worried about coordinating family and job and then concerned themselves with how to study and decisions about what coursework to pursue. Hurst (1981) found that whether or not women worked outside their home, they maintained the primary responsibility for child rearing. "More strain is felt by employed mothers than by unemployed mothers, more by working mothers with children under six, and still more by working mothers with young children and yearly family incomes under $10,000" (Hurst, 1981, p. 45).

Family responsibilities must be factored into the equation for college success when thinking about how to help women students persist, succeed, and complete their education. Studies show that there are differences between the college experiences of younger (traditional college age students) and more mature women students. In particular, Marcus (1973) conducted one of the few developmental studies on community college women. She found that community college women in their thirties, whom she referred to as the "middle group," were often in the position of raising young children and had caretaking responsibilities which competed with college demands. This same group felt less accepted by professors, less a part of the institution, and had a slightly higher dropout rate than both the younger and older groups of women. This age group of women had not experienced a change to a more equitable distribution of family responsibilities in the home. The more mature women (40 years and older) seemed to know that they would not fit in and braced themselves for the challenge. They believed, of all the women in different age groups, that college had a positive impact, had given them a feeling of accomplishment, achievement, new confidence, and self-respect. The most mature women seemed to have more freedom from financial and family worries to enjoy the college experience. The youngest group (women in their twenties) were concerned about having their affiliative needs met and tended to be the least satisfied in college. Marcus found the most frequently cited problems were finances, lack of time, lack of self-confidence, lack of childcare, competing priorities, and a variety of institutional barriers including negative faculty attitudes, parking problems, and inconvenient times of classes. Special support services were perceived as helpful by those students who utilized them, and these services helped to mitigate the barriers.

Daniels, (1985), in her essay, "Dream versus Drift in Women's Careers: The Question of Generativity," addresses Erikson's concept of generativity in middle adulthood and says that women have tended to drift into successes. The "drift" is the time women take out for families and childrearing. Work and family are juxtaposed throughout women's life cycles. There may not be a linear career path for women such as has been shown for men. Baruch (1967) believed there was a temporal cycle in the achievement motive. Women have high achievement drives before beginning a family followed by a decline in achievement need which corresponds to a phase of high family involvement. Once the family has grown, women return to an increased

need for achievement. It is clear that families need to be considered into the equation when women return for an education. It also is apparent that when research is conducted on the lifespan, we need to celebrate a variety of combinations of life events that integrate a whole life course (Giele, 1982).

Studies on minority women are becoming more prevalent though it should be noted that very few studies have focused on the experiences of the growing population of bicultural, biracial students. The literature shows that women from ethnic minority groups who have been traditionally underrepresented in higher education experience a greater number and intensity of barriers, finances being the major barrier.

Chacon, Coehn, Camerena, Gonzalez, & Stover (1982) completed a major study on educational experiences of Chicana and Chicano undergraduates in five institutions, a nonsectarian private university, one campus of the University of California, two California State Universities, and one community college. The authors sought to document the heterogeneity and complexity of the Chicana population. Of the 1,214 students polled in the community college, 679 responded. Most were primarily workers and part-time students and tended to be older than the students attending the four-year colleges and universities. The dominant language at home was Spanish, and these students made slow progress towards completing their degrees. The Chicanas tended to be from poor economic backgrounds and lived with their spouses. They spent many more hours on domestic work than males with the same marital status. Those women with children had the heaviest obligations. Sources of stress included lack of time and long hours of domestic work, finances, low self-confidence, fear of talking in class, worrying about not helping the family, and lack of support from parents to complete their education. Few of these women used student support services, and the authors wondered about the quality of their higher educational experience.

Astin and McNamara (1982) surveyed 607 Chicanos of whom 49% were women, and 230 American Indians of whom 55% were women. They were surveyed twice, once in 1971 and again in 1980. Over 60% of the women in both groups were the first generation to attend college in their families. Most of the women in both groups came from large, poor families. Half of these women enrolled in community colleges for economic reasons and to stay close to their families. More than one-third of Chicana freshmen entered a college within ten mile of their parents' home. One particularly interesting finding was that women who had friends on campus were more likely to use academic support services, though membership in campus organizations was low. The career aspirations of Chicana and Native-American women were traditional and sex-role stereotyped. Teaching was a favorite career for both groups.

Weis (1985) developed an in-depth anthropological study on one urban community college campus with a predominantly African-American student body. She studied both the student culture and the faculty culture. A larger percentage of African-American female students claimed responsibility for children than African-American males. Seventy percent of African-American female students referred to themselves as the "head of household." The women said that they were attending college to make a better life for themselves and their children. Many of the women depended on their next of kin to assist with childcare. The urban poor African-American women formed extensive networks of kin and friends who supported and reinforced each other. This support enabled the women to attend college. Some of the women participated in illegal activities to make ends meet financially. Women, when their childcare system broke down, brought their children to class, a practice that was widely accepted by other African-American students, though White students complained. This study of a poor urban community college student body highlights the realities for poor African-American women attending a community college in an urban center and the overwhelming life circumstances which intercede during their attempts to gain an education.

Major and career choice may tell us whether students perceive and act upon widening options. Overall women are not staying in math and science and other careers considered nontraditional for their gender. Astin (1977) found in his longitudinal study that though women as freshmen

had shown increasing interest in traditionally male-dominated professions, such as business, medicine, engineering and law, they were more likely to drop their plans to pursue nontraditional careers in a four-year span. Kuhn Ehrhart and Sandler (1987) found in their analysis of educational statistics and labor market information that 75% of higher paying professional positions were held by men. Seventeen percent of White females work in what the Census Bureau calls professional and technical jobs. Women are primarily clustered in low-status, low-paying, clerical, retail sales, and service jobs, often termed the "pink collar ghetto." Ehrhart and Sandler attribute the underrepresentation of women in traditionally male careers to low college enrollments in these fields and early leaks in the educational pipeline, i.e. dropout. They end their paper, "Looking for More Than a Few Good Women in Traditionally Male Fields," with recommendations for college policies that do not tolerate discrimination, and mandate a range of support services (counseling, career planning, workshops, and internship opportunities) to women so they will consider new career options, persist in higher education, and accomplish their goals.

The American Community College Woman Study: Results and Recommendations

In the context of this research, this author participated in a large national study designed to understand more fully women's community college experiences and the diversity among the female student population. This study was part of a larger Cross-sectional National Adult Education Study that was sponsored and funded by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. The data collection and analysis were coordinated through the Center for the Study of Community Colleges directed by Arthur Cohen in Los Angeles during the Spring of 1986. The overall purpose of the study was to gain information about community college students in a form allowing for the cross-tabulation of variables related to student demographics. Ninety-five colleges participated in the study. Using a Spring 1986 schedule of classes from each college, every fifth class was surveyed. A total of 9,000 men and women students were sampled by questionnaire in 548 class sections, (a return rate of 87%). In addition to the statistical data collected, two interviews with two groups of women students at two different community colleges were conducted.

Limitations of this research included the failure to identify women who were lesbian and women with disabilities and their particular community college experiences. In addition, socioeconomic status was not a variable analyzed in this study. This was not a longitudinal study and was dependent on data from students' self-reports.

There were 4,340 women in the sample who were divided into four age groups: 19 years or less (20% of the women in the sample); 20-26 years of age (34% of the women); 27-35 years of age (23%); 36 years and over (22%). Of the total sample, 26% of the women were of a race other than Caucasian. Thirteen percent of the women respondents were African American, the largest single minority group. Eight percent were Hispanic, 4% were Asian, 1% were American Indian, 71% were Caucasian, and 3% were other. In Eliason's study, (1977) sponsored by the American Association of Women in Community and Junior Colleges, only 16% of the women identified themselves as being from ethnic minority groups.

Thirty-four percent of the sample were married (n = 1,485), 49% of the women students were not married (n = 2,117), 14% were separated or divorced (n = 610), and 2% were widowed (n = 102). In terms of living circumstances, 33% lived with a spouse, 36% lived with their parents, 9% lived with friends, and 8% lived with siblings. Sixteen percent of the students indicated they lived with children under six years of age.

According to the data, women 27-35 years of age experienced the greatest mean number of barriers (2.02 barriers out of a total of 8). Barriers in the survey were represented by the obstacles that kept women from taking a full college load. Barriers included finances, grades, work schedules, transportation problems, inconvenient times of classes, time to study, lack of childcare, and spouse's attitude. As was also hypothesized, the data showed that women living with the youngest children (less than six years of age) had the highest number of barriers as compared to women living with older children. The oldest women in the sample (36+) had the lowest mean

number of barriers, though surprisingly the data showed that of all age groups they least often took a full 12-unit academic load. Lack of childcare facilities presented a problem to 43% of the women living with young children (six and under) and was most often cited as a barrier for women between the ages of 27-35.

Forty percent of the women said finding time to study was the barrier which kept them from taking a full college load (n = 1,732). Twenty-five percent of the women said finances kept them from taking a full college load. It was hypothesized that women from ethnic backgrounds which have been traditionally underrepresented in higher education, (African Americans, Hispanics, and Native Americans) would experience the barrier of inadequate finances more frequently than all other women. Though the relationship between ethnicity and inadequate finances was not statistically significant there was one interesting observation: Almost a third of all the Asian women cited inadequate finances as a barrier to taking a full college load, a larger percentage than any other ethnic group. This warrants further investigation. Asian women were the least likely to participate in financial aid programs of all the ethnic groups surveyed. In general, American Indian and Hispanic women experienced a slightly higher mean number of barriers than all other ethnic groups. Almost one half of the Hispanic women surveyed (47%) said "the times classes are offered" and "finding time to study" presented barriers to taking a full college load. These percentages were higher for Hispanic women than for other ethnic groups. Availability of childcare facilities presented the greatest barrier to Native-American women to taking a full college load.

College pressures were represented in the survey by 10 items including speaking before a class, grades, some instructor attitudes, time conflicts, and inadequate study skills. Though not predicted for, the most frequently cited pressure was "exams and tests." "Conflicting demands on time" was the second most cited pressure by all women. Surprisingly, younger women seemed to experience more college pressures than more mature women. Asian women most frequently claimed that reading comprehension and writing assignments created pressures as compared to all other ethnic groups. Native-American and African-American women most frequently cited "some instructor attitudes" as causing the most pressure for them. The subsequent group interviews revealed that students felt faculty could be profoundly insensitive to the demands of their outside responsibilities such as work and caretaking of children or older parents. Further research on which instructor attitudes produce the most student distress is warranted.

Students were presented with a list of 10 college services and asked if they had participated. Different groups of women utilized services at a different rate. The following data gives the reader an idea about how the various groups differ in their student services participation. Forty percent of the women under 19 participated in financial aid programs and 18% participated in clubs. Forty-nine percent of the mothers with children under six participated in financial aid. The most mature women in the study (36+) were the least likely to participate in both of these services. Overall, Asian and Caucasian women had the lowest participation rates in student services of all groups, and Caucasian women were the least likely to utilize college clubs, tutorial assistance, and financial aid. African-American and Native-American women had the highest percentage for participating in financial aid and college clubs. From this data set, Hispanic women more frequently participated in basic skills courses in math and career counseling than all other groups.

College effects and benefits were other aspects of community college experiences measured in this study, and students were presented with a list of 12 possible effects. This list included items such as increased self-confidence, development of employable skills, sense of clarity about goals, feeling of being better educated, and, on the negative side, marital tension. As had been hypothesized, women over 36 had the highest mean number of positive benefits, and women under 19 had the lowest mean score of benefits. In other words, younger women felt there were fewer benefits to college attendance than more mature women. Women between ages 27-35 were the most likely of all age groups to say that going to college had created tension in their marriages.

Overall, in this study, only 14% of the women chose majors from nontraditional fields such as computer technologies, mechanical engineering, skilled crafts, and construction. Business and related areas were the most frequently chosen majors (20% of the sample), and education and social science were the next most popular majors.

Two sets of group interviews were conducted with women in human development classes geared to returning women. These women repeated that "lack of time to study" was a major problem. A quarter of the 29 students said that negative attitudes on the part of their spouses kept them from taking more courses. One of the women was unable to study in front of her husband because of his anger; another was sneaking to class behind her husband's back; and yet another student was in the process of separating from her husband and had to leave town with her young child in the middle of the semester.

Several of the students were very concerned about the availability of childcare. Research has shown that finding part-time care, emergency care, or infant care is the most difficult kind of childcare to locate in the community (Feiger & Associates, 1987). Time demands for student parents were enormous, and these students were particularly frustrated with some of their instructors' insensitivity to the multiple demands that they experienced with their family, school, and work responsibilities. Additional stress was caused by disorganized instructors who were unpredictable in the amount and kind of work they assigned throughout the semester. This left students no opportunity to plan and organize. One woman complained that the faculty and staff patronized her and treated her like a youngster. Many of the students had no place to study at home quietly. Often, unsupportive friends and parents raised students' doubts about whether college attendance was worth the trouble. Significant others, including children, responded jealously when students studied. One half of the group interviewed felt they did not have the necessary study skills, and writing papers was especially difficult. They lacked confidence that they had anything to say that was valuable or important. They wondered if they had the "stuff" to be a college student.

Most of those interviewed firmly believed that by going to college they had a renewed sense of purpose in life; they loved the networking and belonging to a new community. Going to college had broken their isolation. They felt intellectually broadened and stimulated. Several of the students felt more organized and disciplined than ever before.

Much of the research on women who attend community colleges was conducted in the 1970s when large numbers of women returned to college. This study corroborates much about what we already have learned about this population. Recently, Bernstein and Cock (1994) in an article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* argued that women of color have not enjoyed the success in higher education settings experienced by White women, especially those over the age of 25.

Creating Programs for Diverse Needs: The Santa Monica College Model

Santa Monica College is an institution which has expanded its offerings to women over the last two decades. Santa Monica College has a total of 24,990 students of whom approximately 55% are women and 45% are men. Almost 46% of the student body is now non-White. Women at Santa Monica College have many choices both in academic programs and student services, and they themselves choose to enter the different programs. Other community colleges may want to use the ideas developed at this college. The college offers many programs to keep students involved or aid their involvement, and these include:

- A childcare center for preschoolers
- A CARE program, which provides childcare funds for single parents on welfare and financial aid
- A traditional Women's Resource Center which offers counseling for single parents, referrals to campus and community resources, programs, and weekly workshops, and specialized support groups

- A Women in Transition Club geared to mature women making the transition back into college

- Various Vocational and Technical Education Association (VATEA) grants to support women who are interested in nontraditional occupations

- "On the Move," a grant from the City of Santa Monica that funds college and community services and, most critically, childcare for local teen parents who want to continue on with their college education — the first program of its kind in California

- An active Gay and Lesbian Student Union

- A Black Collegians Program committed to transferring African-American students to both traditionally Black colleges and public four-year universities

- Adelante, a program for students of Latino descent which offers support services as well as cultural and leadership activities specifically developed for Latinas

- SEEK, an evening and weekend program for women working full-time who want to transfer

- Adherence to Title IX, and a concerted effort to bring equity to women's sports — Santa Monica now has, for example, a women's soccer team

- A science faculty that has recently received a large grant to identify, assist, and encourage women and minorities to go into the fields of teaching, math, science, and technology

- A Women's College

The Women's College is perhaps the most unique of the college offerings because it is the first one ever established in the U.S. at a public community college. It was created because of the research which showed that women are more successful professionally, have more confidence, and tend to be in positions of leadership if they are educated in mostly female environments. The Women's College offers a host of general education classes with a focus on women's issues, history, and literature. The environment at the Women's College provides what other small women's liberal arts colleges have provided to their students: plenty of student-faculty interaction, a coordinated set of courses, faculty committed to women's issues and women students, opportunities for leadership, a host of seminars, and collaborative learning opportunities. The local chapter of the American Association of University Women took the unique step of creating two scholarships for women who plan to transfer to a local four-year women's college. The college now has special transfer agreements with several four-year women's liberal arts colleges including Smith, Mills, Barnard, Mount St. Mary's College, and Scripps College.

Overall, students at Santa Monica College have choice. Deeply committed students, faculty and staff, the college administration, the college president, the college board (which is more than half women), the local community organizers, even the representatives of the City of Santa Monica have created a broad base of support for Santa Monica Community College women students. A new presidential task force comprised of community leaders, UCLA Women's Studies professors, and Santa Monica college faculty and students are further investigating ways to increase community linkages and interests, mentorships, and fundraising efforts. Women in different life-stages, different economic circumstances, from different ethnic backgrounds may choose from a variety of services. Women can grow into the college at their pace, mobilizing the resources they need to fit their current situation and move educationally within the college. We have created a developmental approach to helping students. As a college community we are working to coordinate these diverse programs so that students are sure to have access and help throughout their community college career.

There are preliminary signs that the services are paying off though we continue with continuous research and assessment. The college has done exceptionally well in transferring women in general and women from underrepresented ethnic groups. According to the California Postsecondary Education Commission, in 1991 alone,

the college transferred more women than men to both the University of California and the California State Universities. Most importantly, this college says to all women students, "You tell us who you want to be identified with, what kind of help you need, and we will work with you, we will grow with you, and you are welcome here."

Summary

Astin (1993) stated in his study on cognitive development of college students that we must continue to find opportunities for our students to be involved on campus within the classroom and outside the classroom. We may do this by helping students locate on-campus job sites; by creating enough places for women to study on campus; by creating special opportunities for networking and interacting with other students and faculty; by developing special support services which could include workshops to cover issues such as changing roles for women in society, the status of women globally, managing multiple roles, spousal abuse, and sexual discrimination; and by developing academic workshops to address ways of reducing math anxiety and improving study skills. Special programming should be geared to women of color to deal with their specific issues based on what the literature and research has to offer. Information about career opportunities and financial benefits of nontraditional careers should be included in orientations for women students with additional programs highlighting successful women in these fields. Financial aid programs should be made highly visible on campus. Scholarship and extra emergency loan money should be set aside for women students. More childcare is needed, and coordination of community childcare options should occur on campus. Continuous professional development for all administrators, faculty, and staff should include (a) information about the changing student-population, (b) programs to increase sensitivity around issues of ethnic diversity, and (c) programs about the psychology of the lifespan. Teaching strategies utilized by faculty need to include more cooperative and collaborative learning opportunities for students. Women, and especially women from under-represented groups in higher education need to be in positions of leadership on campus, thereby diversifying the staff, faculty, and administrative ranks is critical.

Only when we begin to appreciate and sort out students' differing community college experiences as connected with their outside lives can we initiate successful educational programming. New educational policies for women students in the next century must be based not on old constructions about the traditional college-aged student, but on the actual realities of their development and their lives, as complex and diverse as they are.

References

Astin, A. (1977). *Four critical years.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Astin, A. (1993, August). *Cognitive development in college students: Some provocative new findings.* G. Stanley Hall Lecture presented at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association, Toronto, Canada.

Astin, H., & McNamara, P. (1982). Educational and career progress of Chicana and Native American college women. *The undergraduate woman: Issues in educational equity.* (pp. 215-257). Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.

Baruch, R. (1967). The achievement motive in women: Implications for career development. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 5,* 260-267.

Bernstein, A., & Cock, J. (1994, June 15). A troubling picture of gender equity. *The Chronicle of Higher Education,* B1-B3.

Boland Hamill, S., Hale, C., MacKinnon, A., & Waldron, E. (1994, April). College women's beliefs about the costs and benefits of maternal employment. Poster session presented at the Meeting of the Western Psychological Association, Kona, HI.

Chacon, M., Cohen, E., Camerena, M., Gonzalez, J., & Strover, S. (1982). *Chicanas in postsecondary education.* Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University, Center for Research on Women.

Daniels, P. (1985). Dream versus drift in women's careers: The question of generativity. In J. Williams (Ed.), *Psychology of women: Selected readings* (pp. 425-436). New York: W. W. Norton & Co.

Eliason, C. (1977, May). *Women in community and junior colleges:* A report of a study on access to occupational education. Washington, DC: American Association of Community and Junior Colleges. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 148 429).

Feiger, H. T. (1991). *The American community college woman*. Doctoral Dissertation, University of California at Los Angeles.

Feiger, H. T., & Associates. (1987). *Childcare options for Santa Monica College. Santa Monica College.* (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. EP273 307)

Giele, J. (Ed.). (1982). *Women in the middle years: Current knowledge and directions for research and policy*. New York: Wiley Interscience.

Gilbert, L. , Manning, L., & Ponder, M. (1980). Conflicts with the student role: A comparison of female and male reentry students. *Journal of the National Association of Women Deans and Administrators and Counselors, 44*, 26-32.

Hall, R., & Sandler, B. (1982). *The classroom climate: A chilly one for women?* Washington, DC: Project on the Status and Education of Women of the Association of American Colleges.

Hurst, M. (1981, Winter). The truth about working mothers: Women who work may cheat themselves but rarely their children. *Childbirth Educator*, 44-88.

Kuhn Ehrhart, K., & Sandler, B. (1987). *Looking for more than a few good women in traditionally male fields*. Washington, DC: Project on the Status and Education of Women, Association of American Colleges.

Long, H., & Blanchard, D. (1991). Women students: The community-junior college connection. *Community/Junior College, 15*, 47-56.

Marcus, H. (1973). *Continuing education for women: Factors influencing a return to school and the school experience*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 078296)

Smallwood, C. (1980). What do adult women college students really need? *Journal of College Student Personnel, 21*, 65-73.

Weis, L. (1985). *Between two worlds: Black students in an urban community college*. Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Chapter 4

A New Plan: Total Transfer Management

Carey E. Harbin

The community college movement accelerated during the 1960s and challenged the idea that higher education was a privilege attainable only by a select few in our culture. It made access to higher education available to many students who would not have otherwise been able to pursue a degree. Over the last 30 years and into the 1990s there has been considerable discussion about the mission of community colleges throughout the United States. Some feel the primary mission of community colleges is the vocational-technical preparation of students for entry into the highly competitive labor market of today. Others feel the primary mission is to prepare more students for transfer, especially underrepresented students, to baccalaureate degree-granting institutions. The current popular view seems to be that community colleges throughout the United States have an important mission: prepare students well for vocational-technical occupations and for transfer. In addition, community service and community education are considered a part of the primary mission by many community colleges.

Putting aside the obvious arguments about funding, lack of resources and support, sorting students based upon the goals they choose — transfer or vocational-technical training — is difficult to do. How are students treated when they select the vocational-technical option versus the transfer option? When does a student need to commit to one option over the other? Is it even necessary to pick one over the other? How successful are community colleges at facilitating each of these equally important student choices?

Defining the Transfer Student

Just what is a transfer student anyway? Because there is no universally accepted definition (Banks, 1990) community colleges find it difficult to evaluate how well they are fulfilling their mission. How may one college be compared to another when each uses its own definition of a transfer student? Some possible definitions include the following:

1. Students who have completed at least 12 units of transferable work at a community college immediately prior to enrolling in a baccalaureate institution.

2. Students who attended a community college at some time in the past.

3. Students who attended a community college within the last three years.

4. Students who attended a community college within the last three years and completed at least 12 units of transferable level course work.

5. Students entering the community college in a given year who have no prior college experience and who complete at least 12 semester college-credit units and enroll at a four-year school within four years (Cohen, 1993).

6. Students entering the community college as first-time freshmen who earn six or more transferable units during their first college year.

7. Students entering the community college who go on to complete the second semester of their first year, and who are expected to transfer (Berman, Curry, Nelson, & Weiler, 1990).

8. Students completing 30 semester or 45 quarter units of transferable work at a previous community college (University of California, 1994).

Determining Transfer Rates

Even if a nationally accepted definition of a transfer student were available, the logistical reporting of transfer rates would still be a major hurdle to defining a national transfer rate. Each community college, community college district, or educational agency has a variety of management information system hardware, at a variety of levels of sophistication. Colleges may not be using computerized registration to the same extent as their sister institutions within the same state or region. Out-of-state transfers often are not tracked adequately, if at all. In addition, there are a number of administrative differences among the states as to how the community college in that particular state relates to the four-year institutions. Some are very formal but separate systems having their own governing board. Others are part of the four-year system and governed by the same board of trustees. This again results in great variety among community colleges throughout the United States.

The National Effective Transfer Consortium (NETC) was formed in 1987 and consisted of 29 community colleges in the United States. The purpose of the consortium was to increase the number of students who transfer to four-year institutions, and a consulting firm, BW Associates, was hired to conduct the research. Data was collected from each of the participating community colleges as well as from 14,000 out of 30,000 students surveyed.

NETC's research resulted in a revised definition of transfer rate: *the number of community college transfers divided by the number of students who enroll for credit in one term but who do not in the subsequent term* (Berman et al., 1990). So the question becomes: What percentage of students leaving community colleges go on to four-year schools? This definition excludes in the denominator those who already possess a baccalaureate degree or are on leave from a four-year college or university, as well as those who leave after earning less than six units of work. Using this methodology, the NETC found a national transfer rate of about 25%. Researchers noted a great variation among individual community colleges and, based on input from the participating colleges, concluded, "External factors largely beyond a college's control determine a range within which a college's transfer rate can be expected to lie" (Berman et al., 1990, p. 8). Identified external factors included:

- Mission of the individual community college
- Resources of the individual community college
- Student demographics
- Community demographics, attitudes, and expectations
- Finance and governance structure and other state policies
- Federal policies

- Four-year institutions' policies
- Proximity to two- and four-year institutions
- Local economic conditions
- Local business and industry environment

The NETC research goes on to differentiate between transfer rate and transfer effectiveness. Transfer effectiveness is the "number of students who transfer compared to the number of students that one expects to transfer" (Berman et al., 1990, p. 12). This additional focus allows the individual institution to compare transferring students to students who expected to transfer and did transfer *plus* those who did not expect to transfer but did anyway. The researchers feel this rewards those colleges that allow any student to transfer, whether or not that student felt transfer was important when they entered the college. Using this enhanced definition, NETC colleges reported a national transfer effectiveness rate of 66%. Obviously altering the denominator in the computation significantly increases the transfer rate. A review of factors which affect transfer indicated there was no single factor which dramatically increased transfer but rather a multitude of activities, organizational factors, and transfer-related strategies.

The Center for the Study of Community Colleges at the University of California, Los Angeles was founded in 1974. Under the direction of Arthur M. Cohen, this center has been studying the issue of transfer rates from community colleges to baccalaureate degree granting institutions for the last few years, as part of a grant from the Ford Foundation. During a recent transfer assembly in Seattle, WA, results were announced of the Center's fifth year of analysis (Cohen, 1994). The Center determined the most efficient definition of transfer rate to be "all students entering the community college in a given year who have no prior college experience and who complete at least 12 college-credit units, divided into the number of that group who take one or more classes at the university within four years" (Cohen, 1993).

Cohen's (1993) research and definition acknowledge the great variation among community colleges throughout the United States. He notes the denominator, or number to which the total number of transfer students should be compared, should include only those students taking college-level courses because the units awarded for remedial or noncredit work are not usually acceptable to four-year institutions. The definition should indicate a significant participation of the student and effort by the community college faculty and staff to interact with the student. Hence, he includes the criteria of 12 semester units of college-credit work in order for a student to be counted as a transfer student. In addition, Cohen's (1992) research indicates the need to view the transfer rate within a reasonable time frame — four years — between entering the community college and transferring to the university. Using this definition and the data provided by 395 colleges participating in his most recent study, the Center for the Study of Community Colleges has identified a national transfer rate of 22.1%. While the data resulted in the transfer rate of 22.1%, a great variation in rate of transfer was also noticed among the participating colleges. State community college transfer rates ranged from 11% to 40% with significant variation within an individual state. Cohen notes the variation within the California institutions participating in his study as 3% to 42%, and as a result of these variations, he anticipates beginning a new study on the factors which affect the transfer of students.

Enhancing Transfer Rates

Students who begin their higher educational careers in a community college are less likely to complete their baccalaureate degree than students entering a baccalaureate degree-granting institution as first-year students (Alba & Lavin, 1981; Grubb, 1991; Velez, 1985). Cohen (1992) notes this comparison may be meaningless because many of the community college students may not intend to seek admission at a baccalaureate institution. Likewise, Grubb (1991) suggests bachelor's degree completion may be the wrong way to analyze the positive contribution made by the community colleges. He suggests viewing the community college in relation to the percentage of bachelor's degree-completers who began their education at a community college. Using this method, Grubb (1991) noted an increase from the class of 1972 to 1980 in BA recipients who

began their academic careers in community colleges for low and middle socioeconomic students, high ability-level students, and students aspiring to BA degrees:

> These results suggest that community colleges have been a more important route to the BA degree for students of relatively high abilities and aspirations from lower income and class backgrounds, consistent with their image of being an alternative route for students who are "college material" but whose resources and family circumstances keep them out of four-year colleges. (Grubb, 1991, p. 211)

Though not conclusive, research has also been done on the factors which increase the likelihood of transfer from the community college to a four-year college. Velez and Javalgi (1987) analyzed the data taken from the National Longitudinal Study of 1972. They found 1,407 students were enrolled in a community college in an academic program in the fall of 1972. A transfer was recorded if an individual student noted attending a four-year college after being enrolled in a community college the first year after high school graduation. The three strongest factors found to lead to transfer were participating in a work study job, living on campus, and being Jewish. Other less significant, positive factors included being male, coming from a higher socioeconomic status family, taking college preparatory high school courses, strong previous college performance, parental encouragement for academics, parental and peer discouragement for going to work or pursuing a vocational path, having higher level occupational goals, and higher maternal expectations for educational attainment for the student. If these results were to be used in transfer improvement planning, more students would need to be encouraged to participate in campus work study jobs, thereby possibly increasing the students' commitment to campus activities and higher education. In addition, more community colleges would be encouraged to offer on-campus housing and the necessary financial aid for students to consider this as a viable option. Velez and Javalgi (1987) speculate the strong association with higher transfer rates and being Jewish may indicate a difference in the importance of higher education for future career and professional development within this particular cultural community.

Grubb's (1991) analysis of data from the National Longitudinal Study of the Class of 1972 and the High School and Beyond Study (high school class of 1980) resulted in what he termed "death by a thousand cuts." Declining transfer rates are a result of a myriad of small causes rather than one, big issue. Among those causes, he notes:

- Changing demographic backgrounds of students
- Declines in achievement in high school
- A collapse of career counseling in the high schools
- A increase in the number of "experimenters" entering community colleges
- Shifts from academic to vocational programs within community colleges
- The weakening of academic degree programs as routes to transfer
- An increase in "milling around" (taking lots of units but without having an organized program or the correct units for transfer or employment) in all postsecondary education
- Declining financial aid

American Council on Education published *Setting the National Agenda: Academic Achievement and Transfer* by Palmer and Eaton (1991). Because of variations among community colleges, probably institutional factors account for some of the lack of student transfer success. However, sufficient data is not currently available to clearly delineate those activities, practices, or institutional factors that promote students' transfer from community colleges to four-year institutions.

Until research is completed and a definitive picture taken of the factors which result in success-

ful student transfer, those on the front line of student services and instruction must continue to work for student transfer success without the benefit of these answers. Because of variations and inconsistencies among individual community colleges, it is important to view students as a single group rather than the two different groups of transfer students and vocational-technical students; it is impossible to restrict students to one or the other group. Students move from the transfer group to the vocational-technical group, and vice versa, based on their needs at any given time. Therefore, as a practical matter, all students should be considered potential transfer students.

Based on the principle that all students are potential transfer students, this author developed and uses a philosophy referred to as Total Transfer Management (TTM), a concept that can permeate the entire educational institution system-wide, district-wide, college-wide, division-wide, and person-to-person. Unlike the management technique called "100% Quality Control," TTM accepts the realization that *all* students *will not* be transferring from the community college to a baccalaureate-degree-granting institution, especially in the traditional time frames. However, TTM has as its goal the transfer of *all* students to a baccalaureate-degree-granting institution and is founded on the principle that *all* students are potential transfer candidates. A 100% goal is not likely to be attained, but it is the established target for educational professionals using TTM.

Like 100% Quality Control, Total Quality Management, Total Quality Control, and many other business management techniques, TTM is founded on a series of basic principles which should be embraced by the TTM participant. These basic principles are integral to the success of TTM and the future educational success of students in the transfer function. If the practitioner does not actually agree with these basic principles but only espouses their endorsement, TTM is not a management tool which will work for that particular system, district, college, area, division, or person. Each participant must fully support, in words and actions, the 10 elemental principles on which Total Transfer Management is based. They are:

1. All students are transfer candidates no matter what their present academic functioning level, social situation, or expressed educational goal.

2. All students, provided the resources and motivation, can succeed in transferring to a baccalaureate degree institution.

3. All students, provided the resources and motivation, can succeed educationally at the baccalaureate degree institution.

4. Transfer is an equal priority with vocational-technical education in the community college mission.

5. All students have the right to the most accurate, timely, and up-to-date information available governing the transfer function.

6. Planning is a mutual responsibility between the educational institution, the faculty, and staff of those institutions and the individual student.

7. The educational institution has a responsibility to support the faculty, staff, and the individual student.

8. The faculty and staff have a responsibility to support the educational institution and the individual student.

9. The individual student has a responsibility to support the educational institution and the faculty and staff.

10. All responsible parties will allocate not only sufficient resources to the transfer function but the best resources.

Let us now take a more in-depth look at each of the ten elemental principles of TTM and how they apply to the community college environment.

1. *All students are transfer candidates.* TTM borrows a concept from the medical community called "universal precautions," precautions that ensure that all patients are treated equitably, with equivalent measures of care and caution so that

no patient is in any way discriminated against, no matter what the diagnosis is. Like the health care professional using universal precautions, all community college students may best be served using the universal philosophy that each student might be a transfer candidate at some point in their future academic career. This is not to say all students should receive the same service, but all students should be evaluated individually and informed about issues related to transferring to a baccalaureate institution if transfer becomes a goal that individual student may wish to pursue in the future. Hence, the student does not need to be identified with any particular group, either transfer or vocational-technical, and later served again if the student decides to move from one group to the other. Each student is an individual with specific needs, goals, assets, and deficits. This individuality is seen as a positive aspect by the Total Transfer Management practitioner.

2. *All students can succeed in transferring.* If students are provided the necessary resources and motivation, transferring may be accomplished. Unless an individual student is unable to benefit from instruction because of a significant developmental disability which limits the learning potential of that individual, every student can be successful in transferring to a baccalaureate degree institution. The community or technical college needs to provide the necessary resources and motivation. In this case, *resources* refers to availability of knowledgeable, professional counseling, preparatory instruction and necessary transfer courses, articulation agreements or contracts, access to needed applications for admission and financial aid, as well as library resources which support the instructional component sufficiently. Motivation refers to the emotional climate on the community college campus. Every instructor, staff member, and administrator needs to communicate a positive, engaging attitude. At every point in the collegiate environment the student needs to encounter this "can do" attitude.

3. *All students can succeed educationally.* Again, unless an individual student is unable to benefit from instruction because of a significant disability which limits the learning potential of that individual, every student can be educationally successful with transfer. This success, however, is based on the availability of resources at the community or technical college to alleviate educational deficits. That is, if the community college provides the preparatory course work students need to build their educational background, it will then be possible for them to perform at an equivalent level in the baccalaureate classroom. Given sufficient time, every student may progress through a series of appropriate courses and arrive at the "university ready" status, despite a previous lack of high school preparation.

4. *Transfer is of equal importance to vocational-technical preparation.* Recent legislation has been signed by President Clinton which is referred to as a "school-to-work" bill. It is designed to assist in training the large numbers of high school students who do not pursue a four-year college degree (Jordan, 1994). While the community colleges began as primarily vocational-technical training centers, the increasing demand for access to higher educational opportunities and tightening budgets have required many to evolve into comprehensive community centers of higher education which provide both vocational-technical training for immediate entry into the labor market and transfer education which provides access to the baccalaureate-degree-granting institutions. Program emphasis at community colleges shifts as the priorities and funding from the federal and state governments shift. TTM does not take the position that vocational-technical training is secondary to transfer education. Rather, it assumes that some vocational-technical students will, in the future, want to transfer to a baccalaureate institution. Without providing those students with information about transfer opportunities, a large number of potential transfer students will be missed. Likewise, it is clear from current research that not all students who declared an intention to transfer will indeed transfer to a four-year college or university (Cohen, 1993). Hence it is necessary in TTM to view both missions as equal in status on the same campus, thereby assuring equal access to both vocational-technical and transfer information. One mission should not be sacrificed at the expense of the other.

5. *Faculty, staff, and administration have the responsibility to provide students with the most accu-*

rate, timely, and up-to-date information available governing the transfer function. Without this accurate information, which students have no power to access without the assistance of the community college, they will not be able to plan their educational strategy adequately. The Urban Community College Transfer Opportunities Program (UCCTOP) was funded as a two-year project by the Ford Foundation in the early 1980s. Twenty-three urban community colleges participated initially, and their goal was to increase the transfer process for urban minority students. They made 34 recommendations as a result of their analysis, and many of those recommendations related to collaboration, follow-up, improving the academic environment, and being responsive to student services (Donovan, Schaier-Peleg, & Forer, 1987). Funding was recently made available to all community colleges in California to provide transfer center services to students. Each college has decided how to use those funds. However, each college is expected to invest the transfer center funding to the most effective benefit of the students.

6. *Transfer planning is a mutual responsibility between the educational institution, faculty, staff of those institutions and the individual student.* While the responsibility to provide the most accurate and up-to-date information rests with the institution, there is still a substantial burden of responsibility placed on the student. It remains the student's primary responsibility to plan and act on the available transfer information provided. It is the student who must seek out counseling assistance and advice. Students must take responsibility for formulating and asking relevant questions about the specifics of their own transfer goals. Faculty, staff, and administrators are responsible for being accessible and knowledgeable, but it is still the student who must initiate contact.

7. *The educational institution has a responsibility to support faculty, staff, and the student.*

8. *Faculty and staff have a responsibility to support the educational institution and the student.*

9. *The student has the responsibility to support the educational institution, faculty, and staff.*

Because of these mutual responsibilities, it is necessary for support, both philosophical and monetary, to be provided. Real support is necessary, not just a passing acknowledgment or hollow commitment. Transfer will not be accomplished without these mutually respectful conditions. The institution may support faculty and staff by providing moral encouragement, providing time to conduct transfer-planning activities like articulation, allocating staff time to appropriate transfer-planning tasks, and providing any available funds for transfer services on campus. Faculty and staff can support the institution by actively participating in transfer services to students, by becoming knowledgeable about transfer issues at the major baccalaureate institutions in their area, and by sharing this knowledge with students. Students can support both the institution and faculty/staff by actively participating in transfer planning. Students should not look to the professional staff on campus to "make their transfer happen." The student should get actively involved by asking questions and reading the catalog of the baccalaureate institution. They must familiarize themselves with any and all transfer service literature, contact staff at the baccalaureate institution, and feed that information back to their own community college counselor or advisor. Students must take a proactive role.

10. *All responsible parties need to allocate not only sufficient resources to the transfer function but the best resources.* Rather than assigning one of the less informed and committed counselors or advisors to the transfer service area, the institution should seek the assistance of its most active and involved professionals. Accommodations should be made to encourage those professionals to provide their services to transferring students. Available financial support should also be provided. The faculty and staff who participate in the transfer service area should make the commitment to give 100% to this activity. They should be willing to attend appropriate conferences and workshops, talk with their counterparts at the baccalaureate institutions by phone whenever needed, and be actively interested in seeing students achieve transfer from their community college to the four-year institution. Students must bring their greatest energy and effort to the transfer services area. It is impossible for

limited staff at the community college to do everything that will be necessary to make the student's transfer successful. Students, faculty, and staff must work harmoniously and with mutual respect to achieve the ultimate goal of more students moving from the community college to four-year colleges and universities.

Based on the information from several contemporary research projects conducted from 1981 until 1994, key factors in a student's successful transfer from the community college to the baccalaureate institution have not been identified definitively. Perhaps it is beyond the realm of possibility to expect such clarity. However, while professional research teams continue to analyze data and evaluate longitudinal studies, current practitioners must continue to work with students. They must continue to develop strategies which enhance students' success in transferring, while maintaining a commitment to vocational-technical education for those students who select it as their primary objective. They may have to work "without a net" by developing programs and services on individual college campuses which maximize the delivery of service to students. Other constructs will be as equally valid as Total Transfer Management and may be better. The one thing those of us in higher education should not do is wait. Practitioners must be proactive in efforts to enhance transfer while remaining open to changes based on new data and information from the professional research community.

References

Alba, R., & Lavin, D. (1981). Community college and tracking in higher education. *Sociology of Education, 54*, 223-237.

Banks, D. (1990). Why a consistent definition of transfer? An ERIC review. *Community College Review, 18*(2), 47-53.

Berman, P., Curry, J., Nelson, B., & Weiler, D. (1990). *Enhancing transfer effectiveness: A model for the 1990s.* First year report to the National Effective Transfer Consortium. Berkeley, CA: BW Associates.

Cohen, A. M. (1992). Calculating transfer rates efficiently. *Community, Technical and Junior College Journal, 62*(4), 32-35.

Cohen, A. M. (1993, May). *Analyzing community college student transfer rates: May 1993.* Paper presented at The Association for Institutional Research, Annual Meeting, Chicago.

Cohen, A. M. (1993, June). *Celebrating transfer: A report of the Annual Transfer Assembly.* Paper presented at the 4th Annual Transfer Assembly Meeting, Northbrook, IL. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 358 877)

Donovan, R., Schaier-Peleg, B., & Forer, B. (Eds.). (1987). *Transfer: Making it work. A community college report.* Washington, DC: American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, National Center for Higher Education.

Grubb, N. (1991). The decline of community college transfer rates: Evidence from national longitudinal surveys. *Journal of Higher Education, 62*(2), 194-222.

Jordan, M. (1994, May 5). Panel urges longer day and year for U.S. schools. *San Jose Mercury News*, p. A1.

Palmer, J., & Eaton, J. (1991). *Building the national agenda for transfer: A background paper.* Setting the National Agenda: Academic Achievement and Transfer. Washington, DC: American Council on Education.

University of California, Berkeley (1994). *Transfer admission fall semester 1994.* Berkeley, CA: Author.

Velez, W. (1985). Finishing college: The effects of college type. *Sociology of Education, 58*, 191-200.

Velez, W., & Javalgi, R. (1987). Two-year college to four-year college: The likelihood of transfer. *American Journal of Education, 96*, 81-94.

Chapter 5

Making the Connection Count: Articulation Between Community Colleges and Four-Year Colleges

James C. Palmer

A major purpose of the educational enterprise is to help the student move on — to successful employment, to a life of productive citizenship, to higher educational levels. It is in the latter sense of moving on — advancement to succeeding tiers in the educational system — that articulation becomes part of academic work. When educational advancement means moving from one institution to another, articulation entails the alignment of curricula between institutions that form the educational pipeline, the establishment of bureaucratic mechanisms that enable students to move efficiently from one institution to another, the provision of services that inform students of the educational paths they must follow to prepare for advancement to the next level of education, and the development of procedures to monitor student progress.

At the community college, articulation focuses primarily on links with baccalaureate-granting institutions. Although articulation with high schools, proprietary institutions, corporate training programs, and the military are important (Prager, 1994), ties with four-year colleges and universities connect students with the larger higher education community and offer them a pathway to advanced degrees. It is here that articulation makes its most crucial contribution to educational opportunity.

Bers (1994) notes that attempts to forge and maintain links with baccalaureate-granting institutions fall into three categories. One is the "student development approach," emphasizing counseling and other services that help students prepare for and successfully negotiate the process of transferring to a four-year college. The second is the "documents approach," stressing formal interinstitutional articulation agreements or adherence to state-mandated articulation guidelines. The third is the "academic approach" which involves community college and four-year college faculty in the joint development of curricula leading from entry into the community college to receipt of the bachelor's degree. Reviews of college and state efforts undertaken in one or more of these areas have most recently been offered by Bender (1990), the California Postsecondary Education Commission (1990), Cohen and Brawer (1987), Eaton (1992), Knoell (1990, 1994), Kintzer and Wattenbarger (1985), and Palmer (1989).

While the practice of articulation has been well documented in the literature, prescriptions for articulation success are elusive. The contexts in

which educators conduct the work of articulation vary from state to state and college to college. Indeed, the differing histories and structures of state higher education systems alone will preclude broad generalizations. Furthermore, the numerous discussions and descriptions of articulation undertakings in the literature have not been matched with research into their impact on student progress and degree attainment. Even when prestigious funding agencies have supported well-publicized articulation projects, such as the Ford Foundation's Urban Community College Transfer Opportunities Program (UCCTOP), the lack of data on student flow from community colleges to four-year colleges (along with the difficulty of drawing causal relationships between college interventions and student progress), has made it difficult to assess outcomes (Center for the Study of Community Colleges, 1988).

In the absence of an exact science of articulation, this chapter proposes a framework for thinking about the way articulation efforts develop and are maintained. The proposed framework rests on the thesis that four different yet equally important stakeholders influence any articulation program: the individual institutions that are involved; the academic disciplines that are affected; state policy makers, who have expectations for interinstitutional cooperation; and the students themselves. Each has a valid claim on the articulation process and a corresponding approach to the goal of assuring efficient student flow from community colleges to baccalaureate-granting institutions.

The Institution

In a fundamental sense, articulation is the process of helping students bridge different and independent corporate entities — the community college and the four-year institution. Here the chief problem is finding a balance between the ideal of institutional autonomy (manifested in the right to set admissions and degree requirements that may be quite different from those set by other institutions) and the ideal of access to higher education (manifested in the competing right of students to pursue degree goals by moving from one institution to another). Articulation compromises the former for the sake of the latter (Palmer, 1989; Illinois Board of Higher Education, 1992).

From the institutional perspective, articulation rests on academic diplomacy leading to the development of formal agreements between individual colleges. These articulation agreements, which sometimes augment state articulation policies or guidelines (discussed later in this chapter), take the form of interinstitutional treaties that specify which community college credits will be accepted for transfer by the baccalaureate institution and under what circumstances. Student services are developed accordingly, informing students of the stipulations of the agreements and sometimes structuring continuous advisement and feedback systems that help students keep on the prescribed transfer track. In some cases, contracts are drawn up for individual students. The Transfer Admission Agreements (TAAs) for community college students who plan to attend the University of California, Davis, are an example. As Knoell (1994) explains:

> Each TAA is a formal, written agreement that outlines the courses a student must take before transferring, states the GPA a student must earn, and lists specific requirements for limited access majors. After a TAA is written, the student signs the agreement, along with . . . a Davis campus representative. These signatures guarantee that the student will be admitted to Davis in the major and for the term of choice, provided the student fulfills the agreement. (p. 133)

Commentators on articulation have argued that the maintenance and effectiveness of these interinstitutional agreements depend on administrative vigilance. Smith (1982) warns against the tendency of some community colleges to relegate articulation to overburdened counselors, maintaining that chief instructional officers themselves should take responsibility for articulation. Bers (1994) notes that the wide-ranging activities involved in articulation require the attention of a full-time "articulation-transfer officer" (ATO) who, among other responsibilities, will articulate courses and programs with the curricula at four-year institutions, analyze the transfer behavior of students, track the internal and external factors

that may affect transfer opportunities, troubleshoot specific problems, communicate regularly with receiving four-year colleges, plan campus visits and other special programs, and use feedback from four-year colleges to help faculty make needed changes in courses and programs. Bers is particularly concerned that the ATOs eliminate duplication of effort that may diffuse the college's articulation program and confuse students.

How well does the interinstitutional diplomacy fostered by the work of the ATOs serve students? Dougherty (1994) reviews the scant evidence available, noting, for example, that transfer rates for California community colleges that had established transfer centers were higher than the transfer rates at colleges without these centers. This reinforces the common-sense conclusion that focused administrative efforts to establish articulation agreements and guide students along prescribed transfer curricula offer a preferable alternative to allowing students to find their own way on a hit-or-miss basis.

Yet while he concedes the positive impact of articulation efforts and the good will of those behind them, Dougherty argues that they do not adequately bridge the gap between the community college and four-year college sectors. He maintains that the community college student seeking the baccalaureate will always be at a disadvantage because of "the community college's very structure and position within the higher education system" (Dougherty, 1994, p. 260). Because community colleges and four-year colleges are separate entities, baccalaureate aspirants in the former will face the psychological difficulties of moving from one institutional culture to another, the bureaucratic hassles involved in the transfer process, and the tendency of "university officials and faculty to favor their courses over those offered by community colleges and thus to be reluctant to accept community college credits" (Dougherty, 1994, p. 261). Institutional autonomy also limits curricular cohesion, Dougherty argues, making it difficult for community colleges to prepare students adequately. Articulation, even if accompanied by regular communication between community college and four-year college faculty, "cannot substitute for the regular contact that occurs between teachers of upper-division and lower-division courses within a single institution . . ." (p. 262).

Dougherty's reading of the evidence leads him to conclude that the cost of institutional autonomy is too great. The ultimate answer to transfer problems, he argues, lies not in articulation but in eliminating the structural divides that make articulation necessary in the first place. He advises policy makers to reconsider Zwerling's (1976) recommendation that community colleges be transformed into four-year institutions. He concludes that this may be a viable option for larger community colleges; the smaller community colleges "should be brought under the aegis of state universities" and made branch campuses of those institutions (Dougherty, 1994, p. 270).

Dougherty recognizes that these recommendations, which threaten the institutional identity of the community college, are no more likely to be welcomed than were Zwerling's (1976) criticisms. And indeed, one may question the effects of his structural solutions. For example, Prager (1993) offers evidence that "students [transferring] from some community college programs within four-year contexts may have as much, if not more, difficulty . . . as do students who begin at a community college and seek entry into a senior one" (p. 551). But Dougherty nonetheless reminds us that articulation is unlikely to eliminate attrition in the transfer process. The fact that community college students, unlike their counterparts at four-year institutions, *must* transfer if they are to earn the baccalaureate surely places them at a disadvantage, at least in terms of the statistical probability of obtaining the bachelor's degree (Palmer, 1990). The critical question is whether this endemic cost of the structure of higher education outweighs other benefits accrued through the establishment of an institution — the community college — that affords access to postsecondary education precisely because of its separation from the more selective four-year college sector.

The Disciplines

If individual colleges are academic workplaces, it is the disciplines that tie those workplaces together. As Clark (1983) maintains, "higher education has its work organized in two basic

crisscrossing modes: by discipline and by institution, with disciplines cutting across the boundaries of the local enterprises and the institutions, in turn, picking up subgroups of the disciplines and aggregating . . . [them] locally" (p. 6). The success of articulation, therefore, lies as much in the ability of colleges to strengthen these disciplinary ties as it does on the ability to negotiate transfer mechanisms between separate corporate entities.

From the disciplinary perspective, articulation requires faculty from community colleges and four-year colleges to come to a meeting of the minds about expectations for student achievement in their respective disciplines. One way of achieving this end is to involve deans and department heads (as well as transfer articulation officers) in the establishment of articulation agreements that recognize the varying academic requirements of different disciplinary programs. For example, department chairs at Montclair State College, in Montclair, NJ, reviewed curricula at feeder community colleges in order to identify those courses that should be accepted for credit. This college-wide approach to articulation, which involved discussions with faculty and chairs at the community colleges, was undertaken in response to the fear that transfer bridges offered by institutional articulation agreements may be illusory if disciplinary requisites are not recognized. "It is entirely possible, for instance, for a mathematics course at a community college to be equivalent to a corresponding mathematics course at a four-year institution and yet be unacceptable in fulfilling the designated mathematics requirement of a particular program" (Weinman & Dutka, 1993, p. 39).

A second approach lies in the attempts of disciplinary organizations to develop articulation guidelines. For example, an articulation task force of the Illinois Speech and Theatre Association met during the 1980s "to define the outcomes expected of the general education speech communication course required by most colleges and universities and, then, to define the appropriate content for the lower division courses in . . . various speech majors" (Illinois Board of Higher Education, 1992, p. 18). At the national level, the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business worked with the American Association of Community Colleges to issue a "Joint Statement on Transfer" providing community colleges and four-year colleges with general guidance for the articulation of their business programs. Observing the inconsistencies with which the different campuses of the California State University System accept business credits earned at community colleges, Friedlander (1993) hopes that the "Joint Statement" will lead to more equitable treatment of community college transfer students who are majoring in business.

A third approach rests less on agreements or guidelines *per se* than on projects that engage both community college and four-year college faculty in the joint development of curricula leading from entry into the community college to completion of the baccalaureate. As described by Palmer and Eaton (1991), articulation undertaken under this "academic approach" begins "at the point of course development so that curriculum content and performance expectations are understood by both institutions" (p. 39). The ultimate goal is a blending of the community college and four-year college enterprises, though from a disciplinary rather than a structural perspective:

> Faculty collaboration is the key means whereby two- and four-year schools can rethink their respective roles in serving the transfer student. Through this collaboration, articulation discussions that traditionally focus on syllabi and credits evolve into substantive discussions about faculty expectations for students and about the academic tasks faculty expect students to perform. Articulation agreements can, in fact, be replaced by educational partnerships that provide students with curricular paths built on identified intellectual and skills competencies rather than on tentative lists of course equivalencies. (Palmer & Eaton, 1991, p. 39)

The projects subsidized from 1989 through 1993 by the National Center for Academic Achievement and Transfer (NCAAT) illustrate initial attempts to implement the academic model of articulation at pairs of community colleges and four-year colleges. For example, the Houston

Community Colleges and the University of Houston formed faculty "curriculum teams" in the areas of English, mathematics, and history. These teams met monthly "to develop [instructional] goals . . . to prepare instruction based on those goals, and to decide on classroom research techniques that could be used to assess their effectiveness" (Eaton, 1992, p. 36). In New York City, faculty from Hunter College and the Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC) worked together on the development of a two-semester mathematics sequence to be offered at both institutions for students majoring in early childhood education (ECE). "Prior to the . . . project, the math course taken by ECE majors at BMCC did not correspond to the math course required . . . at Hunter College" (Eaton, 1992, p. 55).

Full implementation of the academic approach will require educators at both four-year and community colleges to reconsider their disciplinary work. For example, interviews with some four-year college faculty participating in NCAAT projects reveal that reward structures emphasizing research and publication discouraged professors (especially those without tenure) from investing their energies in curriculum development activities (Callan & Reeves, 1994). Until teaching and curriculum development are considered legitimate scholarly contributions within disciplines, as suggested by Boyer (1990), this reluctance will be hard to overcome.

As for the community college, a tradition of faculty detachment from disciplinary communities will have to be questioned. The academic model of articulation runs counter to the long-held belief that ties to the discipline discourage attention to the institutional focus of the community college: students and their development. The deprecation of disciplinary ties, a consistent theme in the writing of many junior and community college leaders (Palmer, 1992), has most recently been voiced by Baker, Roueche, and Gillett-Karam (1990), who assert that "a major challenge for the leadership of community colleges is to cause the faculty members to see themselves first as members of the college community and secondly as members of their specific professional community" (p. 291). This viewpoint obviously distances the community college from academe, perpetuates four-year college skepticism of the community college enterprise, and causes those working on articulation to fall back on interinstitutional agreements rather than on collegial work toward shared ends.

The State

Inefficiencies in articulation concern state policy makers, if only because the facilitation of student movement between the community college and four-year sectors is implied in the very structure of state higher education systems. From the state perspective, institutional prerogatives and disciplinary nuances take a back seat to ease of student flow between colleges. Articulation rests on coordination and control, either through legislation, regulation, or cajolement. Its practitioners operate within the tension that is constantly present between individual colleges, which often resent state "intrusion" (Tschechtelin, 1994, p. 109), and state agencies, which expect the individual college to "look and listen to a wider audience than itself . . . pay attention to state issues, and . . . take an active role in seeking solutions to state problems even when it results in changing the college agenda to some degree" (Tschechtelin, 1994, p. 113).

States vary widely in terms of their approaches to articulation. But reviews of state-level articulation efforts (e.g., Bender, 1990; California Postsecondary Education Commission, 1990; Cohen & Brawer, 1987; Kintzer & Wattenbarger, 1985; Knoell, 1990; Palmer, 1989) suggest that they fall into several categories. One must be reserved for statewide articulation agreements, such as those in Florida and Illinois, which stipulate that students who earn the associate's degree or its equivalent may transfer to state universities as juniors without having to repeat lower-division general education requirements. Other state articulation initiatives include common course numbering schemes that apply to lower-division curricula at all state colleges and universities, state course equivalency guides, computerized data bases that track student movement throughout the different sectors of a state's higher education system, and the funding of transfer centers or other special projects aimed at helping minority students transfer to four-year colleges or universities. Some states also

facilitate communication between transfer coordinators at individual colleges or establish faculty task forces to oversee articulation within individual disciplines.

More recently, some states have approached articulation from the curricular perspective, working with community colleges and four-year colleges to establish transferable general education or liberal arts modules that represent system-wide expectations for lower division achievement. For example, Virginia's State Board for Community Colleges has joined the Virginia State Council of Higher Education in endorsing a transfer module consisting of 35 semester hours of specified arts and sciences courses to be offered throughout the Virginia Community College System and accepted for credit by the state's four-year colleges (Virginia State Council of Higher Education and the Virginia State Department of Community Colleges, 1991). As another example, the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) has begun a statewide articulation initiative involving faculty from community colleges and four-year colleges in the development of model lower-division curricula. The first product of the initiative, a transferable general education curriculum, was released for comment in 1993 and endorsed by the IBHE and the Illinois Community College Board in 1994 (Illinois Board of Higher Education, 1994). It defines the purpose of general education, specifies a 37-41 semester-hour sequence of courses in five areas (communication, mathematics, humanities and fine arts, social and behavioral sciences, and physical and life sciences), and delineates the competencies students are to demonstrate in each. Over 100 community college and four-year college faculty members from each of the five disciplinary areas represented in the model curriculum contributed to its development.

The literature yields no studies of public satisfaction with these articulation measures, but a lingering impatience with perceived transfer problems is evident in legislative actions that require, or at least urge, individual colleges or systems to take more urgent steps toward the development of interinstitutional articulation agreements. In Indiana legislators issued a resolution in 1989 calling on "all state universities and [the] Indiana Vocational Technical College . . . `to enter into articulation agreements to facilitate the transfer of credits from courses successfully completed by students enrolled in Indiana Vocational Technical College's associate of science programs'" (Indiana State Commission for Higher Education, 1989, p. 35). In California, a comprehensive review of the state's master plan for higher education during the 1980s led to the passage of more ambitious legislation, Senate Bill 507, which sought to guarantee university openings for community college students who follow prescribed transfer curricula and which would have required the establishment of articulation agreements covering transfer between sectors of higher education generally and within individual disciplinary areas. The California Postsecondary Education Commission (1990) notes, "Although the legislation was vetoed by the governor, citing concerns about fiscal consequences, the policy goals contained in it have widespread support, and the segments [of California's three-part higher education system] are expected to move forward to the extent they can to implement it" (p. 1).

Additional legislative actions are summarized by Bender (1990), who maintains "that legislatures, reflecting public sentiment, are becoming increasingly intolerant of traditions, structures and attitudes of academe that place institution [sic] interest above the importance and worth of the student" (p. 19). This tension between the public and the higher education establishment, to the extent that it exists, implies a shift in the state's role in articulation, moving it from the regulatory to the political, from attempts to provide a statewide structure for articulation within systems of higher education (through articulation agreements or the coordination of faculty meetings) to attempts to reconceptualize the nature of those systems themselves. Bender argues, "The general public and their elected representatives perceive publicly sponsored or supported postsecondary institutions as a system of interdependent and complementary elements that fit together as a whole, not as different competing elements. Education is viewed as a process, not as institutional forms or types" (p. 6).

The ideals expressed here, which envision a seamless continuum of educational opportuni-

ties, are strikingly similar to the ideals of those who would weaken the institutional boundaries of academic work by merging institutions themselves or by exploiting and strengthening the disciplinary ties of faculty members.

The Students

The formal articulation structures established by states and individual institutions influence student behavior — but only to a point. Florida's statewide articulation policy, which is written into the state's education code, ties transfer to the associate's degree; students who have earned the community college credential may transfer to the state university system as juniors without being required to complete additional lower-division general education courses. But data collected during the late 1980s reveal that 31% of the community college students who transfer to the state university system do so without earning the associate's degree (Belcher & Baldwin, 1991). In Illinois, a state with an "articulation compact" that also structures transfer around the associate's degree but that is *not* legally binding on universities, only 44% of community college students transferring to four-year colleges in the late 1980s earned the community college credential (Illinois Board of Higher Education, 1992).

As long as the associate's degree is an option rather than a requirement for transfer, students will exert their own influence on articulation via the individual decisions they make as education consumers. Some of those decisions reflect a drive for efficiency. For example, in Virginia, some transfer students testifying before the Joint Committee on Transfer Students (1991) revealed that they transferred without the associate's degree because they "only wanted to stay at the community college long enough to be prepared for transferring and because they did not want to lose credits that would not transfer" (p. 10). Transfer modules (discussed above) are in part a response to these concerns. The Virginia module is prefaced by the frank statement that institutional prescriptions have a limited effect: "Although community colleges typically recommend that students complete the associate degree prior to transfer, many students choose to transfer before graduating" (Virginia State Council of Higher Education and the Virginia State Department of Community Colleges, 1991, p. 4).

But other students transfer after amassing a considerable number of community college credits, often more than the number required for the associate's degree. A recent study of 15,278 community college students transferring to 30 public four-year institutions in 13 states determined that the students fell into the following quartiles in terms of the number of community college credits (semester hours) earned prior to transfer: 1-49; 49-63; 63-73; and 72 or more. Despite the large proportion of students who had earned 60 or more semester hours, only 37% came to the four-year college with the associate's degree (Palmer, Ludwig, & Stapleton, 1994). Here student decision making may be inefficient and based on poor information. But it may also reflect the unsure goals of students and their deliberate attempts to explore options before settling on a definite course of study.

In the eyes of some, variability in the ways students use community colleges as a springboard to baccalaureate-granting institutions is a healthy sign of responsiveness to the population's diverse educational needs. Knoell (1990) warns against the development of articulation policies that would force all community college students into a lockstep pattern, thereby precluding the flexibility that may accommodate students who follow nontraditional academic paths. She fears that such rigidity may be an unwitting by-product of the growing legislative involvement in articulation.

But the cost of this variability may lie in the skepticism of receiving four-year colleges. Because community college students transfer at any point — with or without the associate's degree — the act of transfer itself does not signify that the student has met a specific standard of achievement. This makes it all the more difficult for receiving institutions to assess their educational backgrounds (Palmer, 1990). While community college educators complain of inconsistencies in the ways four-year colleges assess and accept the community colleges' credits earned by transfer students (e.g., Friedlander, 1993), the four-year colleges are themselves faced with a variable product in the transfer students seeking

admission. Absent the seamless curriculum envisioned by those who would unite community colleges and four-year colleges via structural or disciplinary means, this variability will bedevil articulation programs.

Conclusion

By meeting the demand for access to higher education through the creation of community colleges rather than by loosening admissions standards to universities themselves, policy makers in the post-World War II era tied educational opportunity to articulation between the community college and four-year college sectors. It is not surprising, therefore, that processes facilitating this articulation receive considerable scrutiny. This scrutiny, in turn, reveals articulation to be a multifaceted issue affected by institutional bureaucracies, disciplinary communities, state agencies, and students themselves.

Problems in articulation may arise when one or more of these four stakeholders is ignored. Students may go their own way if interinstitutional or state articulation agreements specify transfer paths that, from the student perspective, appear inefficient. Faculty at four-year institutions may impose additional burdens on transfer students (such as upper-division general education courses) if articulation structures do not consider the requisites in individual disciplines. States may become more directive if interinstitutional articulation efforts do not achieve the efficiencies demanded of the public. Furthermore, the perceived needs and priorities of these stakeholders change over time. Legislative interest in articulation, for example, is a relatively recent phenomenon that reflects (among other issues) contemporary public concerns about the cost of higher education and the time it takes to earn a bachelor's degree. Different issues may drive articulation in the future. As Cohen and Brawer (1987) note, "the ground is continually shifting" (p. 168).

An overriding issue, however, is whether investment in articulation adequately helps students negotiate the divide between the community college and four-year sectors of a tiered system of higher education. Many respond in the affirmative, notably Knoell (1990), who argues against state policies that would restrict institutional flexibility. Others, however, are less sure. Advocates of the academic articulation model (e.g., Eaton, 1990) call for the reduction of institutional boundaries when it comes to curriculum development. Dougherty (1994) calls for more drastic action and advocates the elimination of autonomous community colleges altogether.

But future examinations of articulation may focus less on the question, "Is articulation effective in facilitating student transfer?" and more on the question "Under what circumstances is articulation effective?" Most observers of articulation (including those cited in this chapter) write from a macro or system viewpoint, treating community colleges as a homogeneous entity to be linked with an equally homogeneous four-year college sector. This belies interinstitutional differences of the type uncovered by Turner's (1992) case study of three community colleges in California. Her study suggests that "informal networks [between community colleges and four-year colleges] appear to actually drive the transfer process" (p. 29) and that these networks are based on the community college's "transfer status." This "transfer status" varies from institution to institution and "is perpetuated not only by individual differences in student capability, but also by the historical relationships between community colleges and four-year colleges and by the propensity of four-year colleges to respond more readily to community colleges with good transfer records than to those with low records" (p. 31).

These and other factors undoubtedly account for the wide variations between the transfer rates of individual community colleges participating in the Transfer Assembly Project (Cohen, 1993). An understanding of the root causes of these variations will assist community college educators who would improve transfer opportunities for students. Some of those causes may be situational and therefore out of the control of administrators. Location is an example; transfer will be easier for students at community colleges that are near universities than for students at community colleges in remote locations. But others certainly stem from the educational priorities and decisions made by college leaders.

Though attention to articulation will always be necessary (short of a complete restructuring of the segmented system of higher education), study of how individual community colleges may enhance their capacity as collegiate institutions is a desired corollary. The ways colleges work with first-time students may figure largely in this capacity, spelling the difference between an institution at which the student simply shows up for classes and the institution in which a student matriculates, learns, and enjoys learning.

Articulation with the four-year sector will surely be strengthened to the extent that it is viewed as only one step in a series of institutional efforts undertaken from the point of entry to assure that students who begin baccalaureate studies at a community college enter into and involve themselves in a well defined program of collegiate study.

References

Baker, G. A. III, Roueche, J. E., & Gillett-Karam, A. (1990). *Teaching as leading: Profiles of excellence in the open door college*. Washington, DC: American Association of Community and Junior Colleges.

Belcher, M., & Baldwin, A. (1991). *The community college and transfer: Some indicators from state data*. (Research report No. 91-05R). Miami, FL: Miami-Dade Community College. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 331 556)

Bender, L. W. (1990). *Spotlight on the transfer function: A national study of state policies and practices*. Washington, DC: American Association of Community and Junior Colleges.

Bers, T. H. (1994). Articulation and transfer. In A. M. Cohen & F. B. Brawer (Eds.), *Managing community colleges: A handbook for effective practice* (pp. 247-261). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Boyer, E. L. (1990). *Scholarship reconsidered: Priorities of the professoriate*. Princeton, NJ: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

California Postsecondary Education Commission. (1990). *Transfer and articulation in the 1990s: California in the larger picture*. (CPEC-R-90-30). Sacramento, CA: Author. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 338 200)

Callan, P. M., & Reeves, K. (1994, September). *Lessons learned from the National Center for Academic Achievement and Transfer*. San Jose, CA: California Higher Education Policy Center.

Center for the Study of Community Colleges. (1988). *An assessment of the Urban Community Colleges Transfer Opportunities Program. The Ford Foundation's second stage transfer opportunity awards. Final report*. Los Angeles: Author. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 293 573)

Clark, B. R. (1983). *The higher education system: Academic organization in cross-national perspective*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Cohen, A. M. (1993, June). *Celebrating transfer: A report of the Annual Transfer Assembly*. Paper presented at the 4th Annual Transfer Assembly Meeting, Northbrook, IL. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 358 877)

Cohen, A. M., & Brawer, F. B. (1987). *The collegiate function of community colleges*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Dougherty, K. J. (1994). *The contradictory college: The conflicting origins, impacts, and futures of the community college*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Eaton, J. S. (1990). *The academic model of transfer*. Transfer Working Papers, Vol. 1, No. 1. Washington, DC: National Center for Academic Achievement and Transfer.

Eaton, J. S. (1992). *Faculty and transfer: Academic partnerships at work*. Washington, DC: American Council on Education.

Friedlander, J. (1993). *California State Universities' business education policies: Their cost to community college students and the state*. Santa Barbara, CA: Santa Barbara City College. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 360 006)

Illinois Board of Higher Education. (1992). *Undergraduate education: Transfer and articulation.*

Springfield, IL: Author. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 343 638)

Illinois Board of Higher Education. (1994, May). *General education core curriculum*. Springfield, IL: Illinois Board of Higher Education.

Indiana State Commission for Higher Education. (1989). *Transfer of credit study*. Indianapolis: Author. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 319 430)

Joint Committee on Transfer Students. (1991). *Summary report: Campus hearings of the Joint Committee on Transfer Students*. Richmond, VA: Virginia Community College System.

Kintzer, F. C., & Wattenbarger, J. L. (1985). *The articulation/transfer phenomenon: Patterns and directions*. Washington, DC: American Association of Community and Junior Colleges.

Knoell, D. (1990). *Transfer, articulation and collaboration: Twenty-five years later*. Washington, DC: American Association of Community and Junior Colleges.

Knoell, D. (1994). Improving transfer effectiveness. In G. A. Baker, III (Ed.), *A handbook on the community college in America: Its history, mission, and management* (pp. 123-136). Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Palmer, J. C. (1989). Issues in program articulation. In D. W. Stewart (Ed.), *Problems faced by military personnel in pursuing higher education programs* (pp. 3-21). Pensacola, FL: Defense Activities for Nontraditional Education Services. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 314 603)

Palmer, J. C. (1990). *What do we know about transfer?* (Transfer Working Papers, Vol. 2, No. 4) Washington, DC: National Center for Academic Achievement and Transfer, American Council on Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 345 807)

Palmer, J. C. (1992). Faculty professionalism reconsidered. In K. Kroll (Ed.), *Maintaining faculty excellence*. New Directions for Community Colleges, No. 79 (pp. 29-38). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Palmer, J. C., & Eaton, J. S. (1991). Building the national agenda for transfer: A background paper. In *Setting the national agenda: Academic achievement and transfer* (pp. 15-52). Washington, DC: American Council on Education.

Palmer, J. C., Ludwig, M., & Stapleton, L. (1994). *At what point do community college students transfer to baccalaureate-granting institutions? Evidence from a 13 state study*. Washington, DC: American Council on Education.

Prager, C. (1994). The articulation function of the community college. In G. A. Baker, III (Ed.), *A handbook on the community college in America: Its history, mission, and management* (pp. 495-507). Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Prager, C. (1993). Transfer and articulation within colleges and universities. *Journal of Higher Education, 64*(5), 539-554.

Smith, J. E. (1982). Articulation and the chief instructional officer. In F. C. Kintzer (Ed.), *Improving articulation and transfer relationships*. New Directions for Community Colleges, No. 39 (pp. 41-50). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Tschechtelin, J. D. (1994). The community college and the state. In A. M. Cohen & F. B. Brawer (Eds.), *Managing community colleges: A handbook for effective practice* (pp. 101-122). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Turner, C. S. V. (1992). It takes two to transfer: Relational networks and educational outcomes. *Community College Review, 19*(4), 27-33.

Virginia State Council of Higher Education and the Virginia State Department of Community Colleges. (1991). *State policy on transfer*. Richmond: Authors. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 339 441)

Weinman, E., & Dutka, J. T. (1993). Transfer articulation: Using a team approach. *College and University, 69*(1), 38-42.

Zwerling, L. S. (1976). *Second best: The crisis of the community college*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Chapter 6

Building a Path: Orientation as the Critical Link to Student Success

Les P. Cook

For new and entering students to become a success in college, orientation is a necessary beginning. The need for orientation programs at community colleges is indicated by the fact that populations served are in a process of constant change. Long past are the days when orientation programs could be designed to meet the needs of one specific population. If we are to provide programs that allow the student to make a smooth transition then we must address the diversity of populations we are serving. Today, community colleges must accommodate students from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds, those who are physically disadvantaged, people of color or from different ethnic cultures, underprepared students, those right out of high school, and older adult learners.

This chapter will look at orientation at community colleges, why it is important for entering students, and will consider the development and key components of successful programs. It will also provide ideas for orienting the often diverse population served.

Why Orientation?

The notion that orientation is critical to a student's success has sometimes been neglected at community colleges. Some community colleges have had orientation programs in existence for many years, and at others it is a fairly new practice.

There are numerous reasons why orientation is needed. The main purpose of orientation should be to assist the student in making a smooth transition and adjustment to collegiate life while at the same time breaking down some of the fears and anxieties that may exist. Although orientation is generally seen as advantageous for entering students, it may also benefit others. Titley (1985) identifies five groups that benefit from orientation programs: students, parents, faculty, staff, and the institution. Students gain new wisdom about themselves, and their anxiety may be reduced by establishing contact with peers, faculty, and staff. Parents and families may gain a clearer understanding of the role of the institution and their role in helping their student achieve educational success. Faculty benefit by having students that are better prepared to make the academic adjustment and are knowledgeable about programs, policies, and procedures. Orientation frees up student affairs staff so that they are available to provide more individualized assistance. The institution as a whole benefits by providing the

students with tools they can use to enhance their success, and by accommodating the needs of many in a large group in a timely and economical manner.

Although some perceive orientation programs to be much different at community colleges, I would argue that there are more similarities than differences when contrasting programs offered by community and four-year institutions. In assisting students in their transition, community colleges, like four-year institutions, have many challenges. "Students of today, compared to those of yesteryear, are more diverse by age, race, socioeconomic class, culture, gender, academic preparation, family support and stability, sexual orientation, mental and physical health, employment, financial support, enrollment status, time to graduate, and attitudes and values" (Upcraft, 1993, p. 7).

Program Goals

Smith and Brackin (1993) assert that before one goes about developing an orientation program, three basic questions should be asked:

1. What is the nature and mission of the institution?

2. What is the mission of the orientation program?

3. What orientation program content will accomplish this mission?

With these thoughts in mind it is evident that the implementation of a successful orientation program must include an orientation mission statement that is congruent with that of the institution. In developing a mission statement that declares the purpose of orientation at the institution, the Council for the Advancement of Standards suggests that "the mission of student orientation must be to provide for continuing services and assistance that will aid new students in their transition to the institution; expose new students to the broad educational opportunities of the institution; and integrate new students into the life of the institution" (Council for the Advancement of Standards, 1988, p. 21).

Once the mission of orientation has been addressed then goals may be formulated. The fundamental goal of orientation programs is to ensure the success and adjustment of entering students. Every institution is unique in size, population of students served, and programs offered. Because of this uniqueness, the type of programs at each institution should be different and individualized. Upcraft and Farnsworth (1984), however, highlight four specific areas that orientation programs should address. First, the primary emphasis of orientation programs should be to assist students with their adjustment to the academic environment. Students at community colleges, whether they are fresh out of high school or returning adult learners, will have needs that are much different, and it is important that these academic requirements be addressed.

Second, orientation programs and services should assist students with their personal adjustment to the social environment (Upcraft & Farnsworth, 1984). Because the community college will have many different populations it is important that students are acquainted with all of the opportunities that exist for them on campus. From student activities to support services it is critical that students be familiar with programs designed to help them minimize their anxieties, lessen their stress, and increase their self-awareness. "From the initial point of contact with the student, the institution must ensure that the entering student is integrated into the social and academic communities of the institution. Orientation programs can assist students in acquiring interpersonal and developmental skills to become socially adjusted citizens within the learning community" (Smith & Brackin, 1993, p. 37).

Third, orientation programs may provide parents and family members with educational information and services to increase awareness of possible changes the student may experience during the transition to the institution (Upcraft & Farnsworth, 1984). The role of family, friends, and "significant others" is critical to community college students. Because many of the students are employed at least half-time, have families, commute to campus, and have other obligations, the support they receive may lead to their success or failure.

Fourth, orientation programs and services should provide the institution with a better understanding of its entering students (Upcraft & Farnsworth, 1984). Programs should allow opportunities for new students and faculty to discuss institutional expectations and perceptions, as well as observations of the social and academic climate of the campus.

"Orientation programs provide opportunities for entering students to develop realistic academic and personal goals, to locate student support services and resources, to meet faculty and/or peer mentors. In addition, orientation programs can assist families in understanding the student's intellectual and social transition to a new environment" (Smith & Brackin, 1993, p. 37). Once the goals of the program have been decided upon, it is time to look at the actual development of programs.

Program Development

The first step, after the goals have been established, is to identify the population of students to be reached. One might begin by initiating a program for one specific population of students and then adding and expanding programs each year. Titley states:

> Overall we must look at new ways of achieving traditional goals and additional ways of meeting new goals. We must be cognizant of changes in the milieu of higher education and in our student populations and keep abreast of political factors that affect orientation. If we do not do all these things, we will not be able to sustain the positive growing impact of orientation on retention in recent decades. (p. 223)

Community colleges are faced with demographic challenges that are virtually nonexistent at four-year residential institutions. As student demographics change so should orientation programming:

> At one time, orientation was planned primarily with the traditionally-aged, full-time, residential undergraduate in mind. In recent years, however, the demographics on college campuses in the United States have changed. These changes, in turn, have altered orientation programming. Fluctuating economic conditions, federally-funded student aid programs, the maturation of the baby-boomers, the change in gender-role expectations, the replacement of an industrial society with an information society, the G.I. Bill, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act have all had an impact on the numbers and types of students entering college. (Jacobs, 1993, p. 79)

The second step is identification of resources available. These resources may be any number of things from staff to funding and should include everything that contributes to the success of the program. On most community college campuses the person responsible for orientation generally has many other responsibilities, and orientation is seen as just another duty or assigned task. According to Mullendore (1992), "The orientation director must be extremely proficient in coordination, negotiation, supervision, and public relations in order to effectively meander through the institutional milieu and implement a meaningful and successful program or series of programs" (p. 43).

The orientation function on many campuses is highly dependent on paraprofessionals or student leaders. Although the use of peers is recommended, it is often a difficult task to achieve on community college campuses due to the transitory nature of students attending. "The student orientation staff must know the standards and values of the orientation program, and they must see those standards and values throughout the entire orientation experience" (Mullendore & Abraham, 1993, p. 70).

The next resource issue that must be addressed is program funding. Costs associated with staff, publications, food, entertainment, and supplies must all be considered. The Council for the Advancement of Standards (1988) clearly articulates the demand for funding: "The student orientation program must have funding that is sufficient to carry out its mission and to support the following, where applicable: staff salaries; purchase and maintenance

of office furnishings, supplies, materials, and equipment including current technology; phone and message costs; printing and media costs; institutional memberships in appropriate professional organizations; relevant subscriptions and necessary library resources; attendance at professional association meetings, conferences and workshops; and other professional development activities" (p. 24).

The issue of funding is indeed critical to orientation programming. In order to combat problems in funding, some institutions charge a fee to students attending orientation to cover the costs that the institution incurs. Others have been successful in getting funding for program development from other sources such as grants, corporate sponsors, advertising, fundraising and different service-oriented organizations within such as ROTC, student activities, or Greek organizations. In institutions where funding is not a concern, most pay for the programs out of the annual institutional budget.

Resources, whether dollars or staff, are vital. "In the current era of growing constraints on program funding in higher education, it is apparent that those programs that will be funded are (a) those that have engaged in planning and have integrated those plans into the institutional planning process, and (b) those that have developed and implemented assessment strategies that successfully link program planning not only to program effectiveness, but also to outcomes, especially retention" (Mullendore & Abraham, 1993, p. 70-71).

The third step in program development is to examine what it is that will be addressed in the program. What issues will be included? What information is vital to the students' success? Are there other ways in which this information will be provided? These are all types of questions one should ask when looking at content issues.

"Orientation programs tend to be seen either as the final step in the admissions process or the first step in the process of adjustment to the new environment into which students are moving. In fact, orientation may be viewed perhaps more accurately as a continuous process of personal, intellectual, and academic development" (Smith & Brackin, 1993, p. 37). For most involved in orientation, the content generally involves two areas — academic and personal development.

The process of becoming oriented to academic life is seen as critical to student success. It is important that students grasp the importance of academics, that they are aware of the institution's expectations of them, and that they realize that college will be much different from any other experience in which they have been a participant. For the entering student, interaction with a faculty or staff member may help the student feel more comfortable and at ease and may provide someone to turn to for assistance. Retention studies indicate that quality student interaction with individual teaching faculty and with peers is the most important interaction in student satisfaction (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1978, 1991).

Assisting entering students in development of strong academic skills and habits should become an immediate goal if such behaviors are not already in existence. For most, the skills necessary for a successful college experience include proficient reading, test-taking strategies, note-taking, writing, and speaking and listening skills. In addition, students need to realize the value of faculty, professional, and peer advisors in class scheduling. Such information must play a significant role in the orientation program.

Another of the most important factors in orientation is the social-personal development of students. For many entering students, orientation is the first place where they will have the opportunity to interact with other students. This is vital to a student's persistence. As Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) state:

> In many ways orientation programs can be thought of as an institutionalized attempt at early student socialization that is analogous to the concept of anticipatory socialization. Anticipatory socialization, as developed by Merton, is a process or set of experiences through which individuals come to anticipate correctly the norms, values, and behavioral expectations they will encounter in a new social setting. If effective, anticipatory social-

> ization should facilitate one's integration into the new setting. Thus, we might expect students exposed to orientation experiences to be more successful in becoming initially integrated into an institution's academic and social systems than their counterparts not benefiting from these experiences. Higher levels of integration, in turn, should enhance persistence. (p. 403)

Ways in which orientation programs address social development vary from institution to institution; in fact, some community colleges neglect to include opportunities for social development during orientation programs because of time constraints. A successful orientation program may introduce students to involvement opportunities, available support services, key administrators, student social life, and major and degree requirements, etc. Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) note:

> If these introductions define an orientation program, however, then once-in-a-lifetime opportunities to orient students to the institution's intellectual and cultural life and values may be lost. Intentionally or not, institutional values are on display during orientation, and the program's activities send subtle but powerful messages to new students about what and who is valued (and not valued) on a campus. (p. 630)

The time frame is the fourth element one must consider. At some colleges, the minute admissions representatives step foot in the high school is the starting point; at others orientation may not take place until a couple of weeks prior to classes starting. The mission of orientation will be a determinant of the time frame.

In establishing a timeline for the program one should begin by looking at when the actual program will take place. In most situations six months would be ample time to organize the program. Program considerations that should be included early on include: reservation of facilities, keynote speakers and entertainment contacted, the development of a theme/logo, establishment of a budget, contacting possible sponsors and donors, and the implementation of a campus-wide orientation committee. The majority of the tasks associated with orientation are continuous and may be cumbersome if adequate time is not given to each. A good orientation leader is one who pays a great deal of attention to detail.

Components of Orientation

Each community institution will have its own unique program for orienting students and connecting them to the campus, yet each program should contain some common components. According to Coll and VonSeggern (1991), "Effective precollege orientation programs provide students with: (a) descriptions of college program offerings; (b) the college's expectations for students; (c) information about assistance and services for examining interests, values, and abilities; (d) encouragement to establish working relationships with faculty; (e) information about services that help with adjustment to college; and (f) financial aid information."

Generally, community college orientation programs include but are not limited to assessment, advising, and registration. However, all three of these programs continue throughout the year and are not specific to orientation.

Pre-Enrollment Assessment

The process of assessment is often viewed very negatively from the students' point of view because it is normally required and includes recommended placement into courses. Pre-enrollment assessment is required at 71% of the public community colleges in the United States (Parnell, 1990). Students expect to take some type of placement tests at four-year institutions, but community colleges almost apologize for inconveniencing students. Fortunately, that is changing as the importance of pre-enrollment assessment is more widely accepted.

Advising

Because of the wide diversity of academic backgrounds and personal priorities, advising each student is a new experience. The majority of advising at community colleges is done by academic counselors or advisors, but many colleges today also use student peer assistants. At some

institutions, students must meet with an advisor before they are allowed to register for classes.

At other institutions, advising may be done by faculty or administrators. Faculty and program administrators can be effective when used to advise within their academic disciplines, but experience mixed results when they discuss course requirements or transfer information outside their field. Clearly, the most underutilized group of potential advisors are student peer assistants. When properly recruited, selected, trained, and supervised, they can produce excellent results. At some campuses, students are used in peripheral activities such as campus tours. However, peer advisors may and should be used in more central activities, and may be the best asset at orientation programs (Mullendore & Abraham, 1993).

Registration

Over the past two decades, registration has become a common and integral part of orientation. In some instances it is the incentive that gets the student to attend. With the advent of computers and technology it has become a very user-friendly process. Common practice allows for telephone registration, mail registration, or registration at off-campus sites. As colleges continue to make registration easier for students, the challenge has been to provide adequate advising to keep up with rapidly developing technology.

In addition to assessment, advising, and registration, many other activities may be an integral part of the orientation program. Special interest sessions and campus tours may be included as part of the program. These sessions may enhance the worth of the program immensely and may include topics such as study techniques, financial aid and money management, career planning, transfer information, and campus issues such as date rape or substance abuse. Due to a lack of staff and time constraints, many community colleges ignore some of these very important issues.

Model Programs

It would be a disservice to the reader if some examples of successful orientation programs were not included in this chapter. A number of different institutions were contacted regarding the uniqueness of their programs and their programs are described below:

- The philosophy at Johnson County Community College, in Overland Park, KS, is that orientation should be delivered in a multi-faceted approach. Johnson County has a program that runs daily for eight weeks during the summer and allows students to apply for admissions, take the assessment test, go on a campus tour, and register, all in the same day. In addition, programs specific to student athletes, international students, and adult learners are designed. Being flexible and responsive is the key to success.

- Miami Dade Community College offers full-day, half-day, and evening programs to meet the changing needs of their students. New students are invited to the campus during the spring and summer for orientation. They also have programs designed for international students, scholarship recipients, students with disabilities, and an informal abbreviated program for reentry students. In addition, all new students are required to register for a one-credit-hour freshman seminar course.

- Orientation at William Rainey Harper College, in Palatine, IL is comprised of three segments. The first segment includes pre-enrollment assessment, information about policies and procedures, and issues of cultural diversity. The success tour is the second segment and is a small group orientation led by a paraprofessional who teaches the "ins and outs" of registration. During this segment of the program, students who are identified as "at risk" are provided a success contract which matches them with a mentor and enrolls them in Survival 101 (a freshman seminar). The third segment is called "The Freshman Experience" and occurs the Sunday prior to school starting. This program is the culmination of orientation and is a highly active energizing program that often includes "Playfair" activities, a motivational speaker, and information about student organizations. Harper also provides a one-credit-hour freshman semi-

nar course that runs for eight weeks and carries general education credit. The programs offered at William Rainey Harper College make students feel they are a part of the community, and that college is a process where they may receive individualized attention.

- The programs at Salt Lake Community College, in Salt Lake City, UT, are broad in nature to accommodate the demands of many populations. Incoming traditional-age freshmen attend an extensive one-day "Welcome" program that includes information sessions, advising, registration, and a picnic with faculty and staff. The key to making this program a success has been in making it fun, worthwhile, and allowing students to get registered. In addition to this program, which began in the fall of 1994, students who have been identified as "at-risk" are invited to a one-week intensive orientation. The program, called "Brains of Steel," focuses on identifying academic weak spots, goal and values clarification, study skills, building community, campus resources, and establishing a relationship with a mentor. Adult learners attend a "Fall Festival," similar to an old fashioned county fair, where they are provided an orientation to SLCC programs and services. Salt Lake Community College also provides programs for single parents, students with disabilities, international students, and parents. Students that do not attend one of the above programs are encouraged to attend a "First-Step" orientation which is a one-and-a-half-hour to two-hour workshop providing information about resources, program requirements, and course scheduling. These workshops are held on a continuous basis approximately five to seven times a week.

- Muskegon (MI) Community College's program begins in the high school where students take the assessment test and then are provided a one half-hour abbreviated orientation. Once this process is complete, they are invited to campus where they will meet with counselors and complete their class scheduling.

- At the Community College of Allegheny County, PA, students complete testing and registration first and then come back at a later time for advising.

- Butte College in Oroville, CA, requires all new students to attend an orientation session. Those who do not, must attend an orientation session after school has begun.

Conclusion

The impact that orientation may have is significant. For part-time students and students entering at different times throughout the year it is critical that institutions take a look at including programs designed for these populations. For employed students, requesting them to miss work to attend an orientation program may not be feasible. "Most will invest one day in taking care of business. Everything offered to these students in the way of orientation programming must have meaning and value. Older students are generally polite but have no time for games or boring speeches. They will quickly let you know that" (Mullendore, 1992). Like the populations they serve, each program needs to be developed with consideration for the uniqueness and individual characteristics of each group.

This sampling is by no means comprehensive but it should provide the reader with some idea of programs that have been recognized as being successful. There are many orientation programs in existence, and all are unique in their own ways. Community colleges have adapted programs from four-year institutions and vice versa. The overriding consideration in developing programs is to do what works for your institution and continue to make modifications and improvements.

The Orientation Forecast

Looking down the road one might ask: Where is orientation at community colleges headed? Will these types of programs survive? What new and unique ideas will be developed? What effect has orientation had at community colleges? Since enrollments have continually increased for the last four decades little attention has been given to retention issues. However, during the

last five years, retention has begun to be more important as federal and state funds are tied more closely to retention and graduation. Orientation is now recognized as an important step in student success. The enrolled student has made a commitment to the college, and a good orientation program will focus on strategies that will help students persist and reach their educational goals.

In analyzing trends at community colleges, the *National Orientation Director's Association Data Bank* (Sharer & Strumpf, 1993) was utilized. Six areas were looked at specifically: (a) faculty involvement in orientation, (b) freshman attendance in the program, (c) sessions for special populations, (d) time devoted to academic matters, (e) time devoted to social matters, and (f) retention studies completed on attendees versus non-attendees. Of those institutions completing surveys, 31 had an increase in faculty involvement, 2 indicated a decrease, and 25 remained the same. Attendance had increased significantly at 34 institutions, decreased at 2, and remained the same at 22. The number of sessions designed for special populations remained the same at 37 community colleges, increased at 20, and decreased at 1. The amount of time devoted to academic matters increased at 21 institutions, decreased at 2, and remained the same at 35. Time devoted to social issues remained the same at 35, decreased at 4, and increased at 19. The last area considered was the importance of retention. Retention based studies increased at 18 institutions, remained the same at 37, and decreased at 2.

This data appears to validate the points being made throughout the chapter: Orientation at community colleges is unique to each school, and it is essential that you continue to adapt, modify, and redesign your program to meet new demands. The data from the *NODA Data Bank* (Sharer & Strumpf, 1993) clearly indicate that there have been increases in each area studied. More faculty are becoming involved in orientation, more students are attending, new sessions are being designed for special populations, more time is being spent on both academic and social issues, and community colleges are placing greater emphasis on the importance of retention. Are these passing trends? To the contrary, they are vital functions which are permanently changing the face of orientation.

The populations that community colleges serve are changing, and the notion of orientation is one that should not be overlooked by these institutions. Every student comes to college down a different road and each has different ideas, perceptions, and expectations. Because of the many different types of students community colleges serve, it is even more critical that programs are designed to assure these students a smooth and successful transition. Orientation may be the link that helps to assure this success.

References

Coll, K. M., & VonSeggern, J. (1991). *Community college student retention: Some procedural and programmatic suggestions.* Paper presented at Wyoming Higher Education Student Affairs Conference, Powell, WY.

Council for the Advancement of Standards for Student Services/Development Programs. (1988). *CAS standards and guidelines for student services/development programs: Student guide.* Washington, DC: Author.

Jacobs, B. (1993). Orienting diverse populations. In M. L. Upcraft, R. Mullendore, B. Barefoot, D. Fidler (Eds.), *Designing successful transitions: A guide for orienting students to college* (Monograph No. 13) (pp. 79-96). Columbia, SC: National Resource Center for The Freshman Year Experience, University of South Carolina.

Mullendore, R. (1992). *Orientation director's manual.* Statesboro, GA: National Orientation Director's Association.

Mullendore, R., & Abraham, J. (1993). Organization and administration of orientation Programs. In M. L. Upcraft, R. Mullendore, B. Barefoot, D. Fidler (Eds.), *Designing successful transitions: A guide for orienting students to college* (Monograph No. 13) (pp. 61-78). Columbia, SC: National Resource Center for The Freshman Year Experience, University of South Carolina.

Parnell, D. (May, 1990). Presentation at Lansing Community College. Lansing, MI.

Pascarella, E. T., & Terenzini, P. T. (1978). Student-faculty informal relationships and freshman year educational outcomes. *Journal of Educational Research, 73*, 183-189.

Pascarella, E. T., & Terenzini, P. T. (1991). *How college affects students*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Sharer, G., & Strumpf, G. (1993). *National Orientation Director's Association data bank*. College Park, MD: National Orientation Director's Association.

Smith, B., & Brackin, R. (1993). Components of a comprehensive orientation program. In M. L. Upcraft, R. Mullendore, B. Barefoot, D. Fidler (Eds.), *Designing successful transitions: A guide for orienting students to college* (Monograph No. 13) (pp. 35-48). Columbia, SC: National Resource Center for The Freshman Year Experience, University of South Carolina.

Titley, B. S. (1985). Orientation programs. In L. Noel, R. Levitz, & D. Saluri (Eds.), *Increasing student retention*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Upcraft, M. L. (1993). Notes from the editor-in-chief. In M. L. Upcraft, R. Mullendore, B. Barefoot, D. Fidler (Eds.), *Designing successful transitions: A guide for orienting students to college* (Monograph No. 13) (pp. iii-v). Columbia, SC: National Resource Center for The Freshman Year Experience, University of South Carolina.

Upcraft, M. L., & Farnsworth, W. M. (1984). Orientation programs and activities. In M. L. Upcraft (Ed.), *Orienting students to college* (pp. 27-38). New Directions for Student Services, No. 25. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Suggested Readings

Boyer, E. (1987).*College: The undergraduate experience in America*. New York: Harper & Row.

Cohen, A. M. (1993). *Perspectives on the community college*. Washington, DC: American Council on Education.

Chapter 7

A Natural Marriage: The Extended Orientation Seminar and the Community College

Joseph B. Cuseo & Betsy O. Barefoot

The Case for the Freshman Orientation Seminar in the Community College

Despite the fact that two-year colleges were virtually nonexistent prior to the turn of the century (Medsker & Tillery, 1971), they now enroll the majority of today's first-year college students (ERIC Information Bulletin, 1991; Parnell, 1986). Moreover, the proportion of future first-year students who will begin their postsecondary experience at community colleges is expected to increase because of (a) economic factors — freshmen are increasingly citing cost as a factor in their college choice (Astin, Green, & Korn, 1994) which makes the local community college an attractive low-cost alternative for the first two years of college, and (b) demographic factors — a growing proportion of the 18-24 year-olds in the American population will be comprised of individuals from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups, who are more likely than majority students to enter public two-year institutions (Freund, 1988).

While community colleges assume increasing responsibility for the education of new college students, there is a rapidly growing body of well-conducted research which supports the value of a "freshman," "first-year," or "new student" orientation seminar for promoting the success of first-year college students. In particular, extended orientation seminars have been found to have significant impact on (a) retention through the critical first college year and return rate for the sophomore year, (b) persistence to degree or program completion, and (c) level of academic performance in college (Barefoot, 1993a; Cuseo, 1991). The positive effects of such a seminar on student retention and academic achievement have been reported at both two-year and four-year institutions (Barefoot, 1993a) and for both academically well-prepared and at-risk students (Fidler, 1991; Wilkie & Kuckuck, 1989).

Research further suggests that participation in a first-year extended orientation seminar has particularly dramatic effects on academically at-risk students, who are disproportionately represented in community colleges (Roueche & Roueche, 1993). Moreover, the proportion of at-risk students attending open-access institutions is expected to increase because more academically qualified students, who might otherwise attend two-year institutions, are being siphoned off by four-year colleges that are beginning to relax their entry requirements to offset enrollment declines in the number of traditional-age

students (Cohen & Brawer, 1982; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1987). Participation of at-risk students in the extended orientation seminar has been found to result in significant improvement in their retention rates (Strumpf & Hunt, 1993) and elevates their academic performance to levels that are comparable to students who enter college with more qualified admission characteristics (Fidler, 1991).

After reviewing the research on the freshman seminar in their epochal synthesis of more than 2500 studies on how college programs and experiences affect student development, Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) conclude, "The weight of the evidence suggests that a first-semester freshman seminar . . . is positively linked with both freshman-year persistence and degree completion. This positive link persists even when academic aptitude and secondary school achievement are taken into account" (pp. 419-420).

The practical implications of this empirical relationship between first-year seminar participation and increased student retention for community colleges is underscored by the fact that freshman-to-sophomore attrition at public two-year colleges is appreciably higher than at all other types of higher educational institutions (American College Testing Program, 1993). This is not surprising because community colleges are open-access institutions with high numbers of students who are at risk for attrition (e.g., academically underprepared, part-time, and commuter students). However, even after these at-risk student characteristics are controlled for statistically, community colleges still evince significantly higher rates of student attrition than four-year institutions. As Astin (1984) reports, "The most consistent finding — reported in almost every longitudinal study — is that the student's chances of dropping out are substantially greater at a two-year college than at a four-year college. The negative effects of attending a community college are observed even after the variables of entering student characteristics and lack of residence and work are considered" (p. 302).

This finding suggests that student attrition at community colleges cannot be simply dismissed as a "student problem" that is completely beyond institutional control. Further empirical support for this conclusion is provided by research indicating that the vast majority of student attrition from college is voluntary, i.e., most students do not "flunk out" — they "opt out." At community colleges, in particular, the ratio of voluntary withdrawals to academic dismissals has been found to be twice that of four-year institutions (Brigman & Stager, 1980).

The confluence of all these findings suggests that community colleges may be able to decrease student attrition and increase graduation rates significantly by means of effective retention-promoting institutional practices or programs. One institutional practice with documented potential for stemming the tide of student attrition at community colleges is the first-year orientation seminar (Barefoot, 1993a). Its retention-promoting potential for community colleges is highlighted by the following recommendation made in a national report issued by the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges (AACJC), "We urge that community colleges give more attention to student retention. Every college should develop a comprehensive first year program with orientation for all full-time, part-time, and evening students" (Commission on the Future of Community Colleges, 1988, p. 11).

Moreover, there is empirical evidence that the first-year orientation seminar is a cost-effective program which reaps economic benefits for those institutions which adopt it. National surveys reveal that first-year seminars operate with minimal funds (Fidler & Fidler, 1991; Barefoot & Fidler, 1993). Moreover, revenues generated by course enrollment and by increases in student retention attributable to the seminar have been found to exceed its incurred costs (Ketkar & Bennett, 1989).

It is probably safe to say that the first-year orientation course has been the most frequently researched and empirically well-documented course in the history of American higher education probably because its novelty and nontraditional content have required the course to "prove" its value repeatedly. In contrast, few people have ever dreamed of subjecting conventional courses and fields of study to such

rigorous empirical investigation because they are supported by the perpetual force of academic tradition and are protected by the political power of discipline-based departments. (There are neither Ph.D.s in first-year orientation nor academic departments of student success.)

Further testimony to the value of the first-year seminar is the rising number of higher education institutions which have incorporated this course into the curriculum. Approximately two-thirds of all two-year and four-year colleges and universities offer some type of new student seminar, and the primary goal of almost 70% of these courses is providing students an extended orientation to the institution, to themselves as learners, to essential academic skills, and to the purpose of higher education (Barefoot & Fidler, 1993).

Though the primary purpose of the extended orientation seminar has been to facilitate students' transition to and success at college, with the ultimate goal of increasing student retention and academic achievement, the course may also serve to realize a number of the following, all of which are consistent with the history and mission of the American community college:

1. *Providing students with education-for-life skills that contribute to lifelong learning and holistic development, i.e., comprehensive development of the "whole person" (cognitive, social, emotional, physical, ethical and vocational).* This goal is very compatible with common themes found in the historical mission of community colleges: the development of the student as a person, rather than the mere acquisition of traditional academic knowledge (Tighe, 1977). As stated in a report of the Commission on the Future of Community Colleges (1988), "The community college, perhaps more than any other institution, is committed to lifelong learning" (p. 4).

2. *Promoting curriculum development by: (a) introducing students to the liberal arts and the academic disciplines that comprise general education; (b) providing a common curricular experience for all beginning students which can serve as a bridge to future courses and a vehicle for making meaningful connections between courses; and (c) ensuring that the curriculum is responsive to contemporary issues faced by college students.* This curricular goal is particularly relevant to two-year institutions because one historical root of the community college movement was a push from university presidents to rid their institutions of general education, ordinarily taught during the first two years of college (Dassance, 1986). In addition, more future students are expected to begin their higher educational experience at community colleges because of aforementioned economic and demographic reasons. This means that two-year colleges will provide the general education experience for increasing numbers of college students.

3. *Stimulating faculty development via instructor-training programs for the first-year seminar which are designed to increase faculty awareness of (a) institutional mission and support programs, (b) needs and characteristics of today's diverse learners, and (c) instructional strategies that promote effective student learning.* These goals are consistent with the community colleges' historic focus on the learner and student-centered instruction (Cross, 1982; Doucette, 1993).

4. *Fostering institutional development by (a) enhancing enrollment management through improved retention, (b) promoting institutional effectiveness by increasing graduation rates, (c) reducing time taken for degree completion, (d) promoting effective utilization of college services and resources, and (e) and providing a vehicle for gathering entry data on students for later use in value-added assessment.* This goal is congruent with community colleges' historic orientation toward and accountability to the public, which is now being magnified by increasing public demands for higher education accountability in all types of postsecondary institutions (Ewell & Bower, 1988; Marchese, 1991).

5. *Building campus community by connecting students to each other and to key student-support agents, and by forging partnerships between members of different divisions of the college that*

are involved in the training for, and teaching of the first-year seminar. This goal matches the theme of a recent report issued by the AACJC on the future of American community colleges, "Building Communities: A Vision for a New Century" (Commission on the Future of Community Colleges, 1988).

The American community college has had (a) a history of expanding educational opportunity, rather than restricting it by admissions selectivity; (b) a mission that focuses on student-centered teaching, rather than discipline-centered research; and (c) a commitment to institutional responsiveness and innovation, rather than encumbrance by tradition (Dassance, 1986; Helfgot, 1986). This trio of community college characteristics should provide a fertile context for the birth and growth of an effective first-year seminar.

Though no single institutional program or practice can be as effective as a well coordinated, multifaceted, college-wide effort to promote student success, there is evidence that "single-facet action approaches" can have significant impact (Lenning, Sauer, & Beal, 1980, p. 23). More than a circumscribed course or an educational band-aid, the first-year seminar represents a single-facet action approach with distinctive potential for promoting student success, and, when coupled with a substantive instructor-training program, it may be capable of promoting systemic institutional change.

Course Content: Taxonomy of Topics and Related Objectives

A review of proceedings from previous Freshman Year Experience Conferences, textbooks designed for freshman orientation courses, and recent surveys conducted by the National Resource Center for The Freshman Year Experience, reveals that the following topics are most frequently addressed in first-year orientation seminars. This list is not meant to be an exhaustive review of all topics that have ever been covered under the rubric of freshman seminar; instead, it represents a synthesis and classification scheme that may be used as a heuristic for guiding decisions on the selection and prioritization of course content. A review of empirical research and scholarship supporting the value of the following course concepts for promoting college students' success is beyond the scope of this chapter, but may be found in Cuseo (1991).

The College Experience, Its Meaning and Value

One of the primary subgroups which comprise the diverse community college environment are students who are the first in their families to attend college or university. A first-year seminar may become a forum within which all new students, and first-generation students in particular, can gain a clearer understanding of the value, purpose, and character of higher education. Any or all of the following subtopics can be included in this instructional unit:

- *Differences between high school and college.* Differing expectations concerning the amount of time to be committed to academic work and the quality of academic work produced; decoding or demystifying the terminology and jargon that is peculiar to higher education.
- *History and purpose of higher education.* Appreciating the goals and positive outcomes of higher education; generating enthusiasm for higher education and interest in getting the most out of the college experience; realizing the importance of active involvement and individual effort for colleges success.
- *History and mission of the college.* Increasing students' knowledge of the institution's mission, college policies, procedures, and campus resources.
- *General education and liberal arts: their meaning and value.* Relevance of general education for personal and professional success; understanding the epistemological and methodological differences among the disciplines that comprise the liberal arts.
- *The curriculum.* Course requirements (general-education, pre-major, electives) and their rationale.
- *The co-curriculum.* Value of campus and community involvement; student leadership; volunteerism.

- *College services.* Exposure to key student-support programs on campus; introduction to and effective use of the library, learning center, career center, and personal counseling services.

- *College personnel.* Exposure to key educational and student-support agents on campus; understanding professors' expectations and assumptions; making effective use of faculty office hours; assessing the teaching effectiveness of faculty in course evaluations; determining when and why academic advisors should be consulted; preparing for individual advisement sessions.

Academic Skill Development: Learning How to Learn

First-year seminars in community college generally include a substantial focus on basic and higher order academic skills (Barefoot & Fidler, 1993) such as the following:

- Lecture comprehension and note-taking
- Reading comprehension and textbook-reading strategies
- Study strategies
- Learning styles
- Information search and retrieval skills, promoting information literacy, and reducing library anxiety
- Writing skills
- Test-taking strategies
- Memory improvement strategies
- Critical thinking

Academic and Career Planning

Commitment to the goal of degree completion and to a possible future career or life plan is an essential characteristic of students who persist in college. Therefore, the first-year orientation seminar should help students begin this process through consideration of the following topics:

- Connecting the college experience with future life plans
- Exploring relationships between college majors and careers
- Factors to consider when selecting a major
- Strategies for effective career exploration and choice
- Strategies for successful transfer to four-year colleges
- Options for postgraduate education
- Strategies for improving employment prospects after graduation.

Life Management: Education-for-Life Skills and Holistic Development

Depending upon the age, characteristics, and felt needs of entering community college students, any of the following topics could become an important component of the extended orientation seminar:

- *Self-knowledge/awareness* — self-assessment of interests and abilities
- *Self-concept and self-esteem* — self-insight and strength recognition exercises
- *Self-efficacy* — internal versus external locus-of-control
- *Values clarification* — self-assessments of values and their implications for life plans
- *Goal setting* — establishing short-term and long-term goals
- *Motivation and self-discipline* — strategies for breaking bad habits and developing productive behavioral routines
- *Self-management* — managing time, managing stress, and managing money

- *Wellness* — fitness, sleep habits, nutrition, eating disorders, substance use/abuse, sexually transmitted diseases

- *Interpersonal relationships* — assertiveness, conflict resolution, appreciating diversity, friendship formation, intimacy, dating, sexual behavior

What unifies all the foregoing topics and subtopics is their student-centered focus. Arguably, the first-year orientation seminar may be unique in that it is the only course in the curriculum whose content derives from and originates with the needs of college students rather than with an external corpus of knowledge that reflects the academic interests of discipline-based researchers and scholars. As one student anonymously wrote in an seminar evaluation, "This was the only course that was about me" (Cuseo, Williams, & Wu, 1990. p. 2). One freshman seminar instructor and researcher characterizes his students' reactions to the first-year seminar with the expression, "We have met the content and it is us" (Rice 1992).

Another common theme that cuts across all course topics in the first-year seminar is an emphasis on the development of highly transferrable skills and competencies. In contrast, traditional college courses focus largely on the acquisition of a circumscribed and prescribed body of knowledge; any transferable skill development which happens to occur is usually tacit or incidental to discipline-specific content coverage. It may be argued that the seminar serves a "meta-curricular" function, transcending content and traversing disciplines by focusing on the development of learning strategies and life skills that have cross-disciplinary applicability.

Furthermore, since the seminar is not tied to a tradition-bound and politically-guarded academic discipline, it has the flexibility to adapt to emerging higher educational issues and contemporary student needs. It is refreshing to see how readily the seminar has been able to incorporate contemporary issues such as diversity, values development, and volunteerism within its preexisting curricular framework. Consistent with this contention are national survey results on the content and form of first-year seminars, which have led its principal investigators to adopt the term "flexible fixture" as a collective descriptor for capturing the seminar's adaptability and growing popularity (Barefoot, 1993b).

Current Characteristics of First-Year Seminars at Community Colleges

The National Resource Center for The Freshman Year Experience and Students in Transition at the University of South Carolina maintains a national database on the first-year seminar in American higher education. To that end, American colleges and universities have been surveyed in 1988, 1991, and, most recently, in the fall of 1994 to determine the nature and scope of first-year seminar programming. Data from the 1994 survey are reported below (Barefoot & Fidler, 1996).

Of the 1,010 survey responses to the 1994 National Survey of Freshman Seminar Programs, 350 responses were from community colleges. Two hundred-twenty (60%) of the responding community colleges indicated that they offered a "first-year" or "new student" seminar (Barefoot & Fidler, 1996; all data in this section of the chapter are from this source).

The most frequently reported goals for first-year seminars at a community college are the enhancement of study skills (n = 113) and "survival" skills (n = 52) in addition to providing students an introduction to campus resources (n = 40). The most common class size is between 25 and 30 students (72%).

At the community college, both faculty and student affairs professionals teach the first-year seminar, but student affairs professionals assume a far greater role in seminar instruction than is generally the case at four-year institutions. The involvement of student affairs divisions in seminar instruction is likely the result of the frequent, close contact between student affairs professionals (especially counselors) and new students. On a growing number of campuses, both two- and four-year, the seminar instructor also serves as the academic advisor for seminar students. The 1994 data indicate

that 31% of community college first-year seminars are linked with academic advising as compared to 20% in the 1991 survey.

The overwhelming majority (85%) of community college seminars carry academic credit which counts toward the degree. The most common credit amount is one semester or quarter hour (51%). Approximately 25% of reported seminars offer two semester/three quarter hours, and 25% offer three semester/four quarter hours credit. Approximately 83% are graded by a letter grade; the remainder by pass/fail or credit/no credit grading.

Only 26% of community college freshman seminars are required for all entering students. An additional 38% are required for some students, generally students who are designated "high-risk" in one or more categories. Elective seminars comprise 36% of the total number.

Recommendations and Conclusions

This chapter has offered a rationale for the development and implementation of a first-year extended orientation seminar for students who enter the American community college. This chapter also has provided data to indicate that such seminars are currently being offered by a significant number of community colleges.

As educators who are directly involved with the administration and teaching of such courses, we are well aware of their value in assisting students of any age and level of ability in making a successful transition to the college environment. Therefore, we offer the following recommendations to community college educators who are considering the implementation of a first-year seminar and who currently administer or teach such a seminar:

1. All community colleges should offer a first-year seminar which is intentionally designed to build a sense of campus community (Boyer, 1987), to encourage student involvement in campus life (Astin, 1977a, 1977b), and to facilitate the academic and social integration of new students (Tinto, 1987).

2. Because social and academic integration, the essential precursor to student retention, depends upon meaningful levels of student-student and student-faculty interaction (Tinto, 1987), we would encourage community college educators to allocate three semester or four quarter hours credit for the seminar and to assure that such credit applies to the degree. Restricting a course to one semester hour (16 contact hours) severely restricts the quality and quantity of both course content and process. Designing a first-year seminar as a noncredit course assures its eventual demise because it is very likely to be perceived as lacking academic integrity and educational value.

3. Because community colleges are a microcosm of an increasingly diverse society, we encourage the consideration of seminar sections for students with special needs (i.e., adults, single parents, and honors students). We do not encourage the offering of special sections restricted to students of a certain race or ethnicity because it reduces opportunities for interracial and intercultural interaction among first-year students.

4. A first-year orientation seminar should be the outgrowth of traditional orientation activities so that there is some logical flow and integration between these proactive programs.

5. Class size in first-year seminars should be no more than 25 students (preferably 15 to 20) to assure substantive class interaction.

6. First-year seminars should be taught by educators who possess the baseline credentials to teach any other course at the college. These educators should undergo special training to prepare them for this unique, student-centered instructional experience.

7. Whatever outcomes are intended as a result of the first-year seminar, these outcomes should be evaluated and results of evaluation reported to all campus constituents.

The first-year extended orientation seminar is a dynamic, evolving course type which has been meeting the needs of generations of new students

at American colleges and universities for over 100 years (Fitts & Swift, 1928), and a well-designed first-year seminar is a proven means to facilitate the academic and social success of students at all levels of ability. In addition, such a course should be a critical component of any institutional plan to enhance student retention. Finally, the offering of a first-year seminar by a community college is an indication of that institution's willingness to accept a major share of the responsibility for new student success by taking a proactive step to insure that entering students are fully prepared to take advantage of all the total college experience has to offer.

References

American College Testing Program. (1993). *National dropout rates. ACT institutional data file, 1993.* Iowa City: Author.

Astin, A. W. (1977a). *Four critical years: Effects of college on beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Astin, A. W. (1977b). *Preventing students from dropping out.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Astin, A. W. (1984). Student involvement: A developmental theory for higher education. *Journal of College Student Personnel, 25,* 297-308.

Astin, A. W., Green, K. C., & Korn, W. S. (1994). *The American freshman: National norms for fall 1993.* Los Angeles: Higher Education Research Institute, University of California, Los Angeles.

Barefoot, B. (Ed.) (1993a). *Exploring the evidence: Reporting outcomes of freshman seminars.* (Monograph No. 11). Columbia, SC: National Resource Center for The Freshman Year Experience, University of South Carolina.

Barefoot, B. (1993b, Spring). A nationwide focus on freshmen. *The Keystone* (Newsletter of the Wadsworth College Success Series), p. 9.

Barefoot, B., & Fidler, P. (1992). *Helping students climb the academic ladder: 1991 national survey of freshman seminar program* (Monograph No. 10). Columbia, SC: National Resource Center for The Freshman Year Experience, University of South Carolina.

Barefoot, B., & Fidler, P. (1996). *The 1994 national survey of freshman seminars: Continuing innovations in the collegiate curriculum.* (Monograph No. 20). Columbia, SC: National Resource Center for The Freshman Year Experience & Students in Transition, University of South Carolina.

Boyer, E. L. (1987). *College: The undergraduate experience in America.* New York: Harper & Row.

Brigman, S. L., & Stager, S. F. (1980). *An examination of the characteristics of voluntary college stopouts, dropouts, and transfers.* Paper presented at the annual convention of the American Educational Research Association, Boston, 1980.

Cohen, A., & Brawer, F. (1982). *The American community college.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Commission on the Future of Community Colleges (1988). *Building communities: A vision for a new century.* Washington, DC: American Association of Community and Junior Colleges.

Cross, K. P. (1982). Thirty years have passed: Trends in general education. In B. L. Johnson (Ed.), *General education in two-year colleges* (pp. 11-20). New Directions for Community Colleges, No. 40. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Cuseo, J. (1991). *The freshman orientation seminar: A research-based rationale for its value, delivery, and content.* (Monograph No. 4). Columbia, SC: National Resource Center for The Freshman Year Experience, University of South Carolina.

Cuseo, J., Williams, M., & Wu, S. (1990). *Program assessment of the freshman seminar.* (Institutional research report). Rancho Palos Verdes, CA: Marymount College.

Dassance, C. R. (1986). Opportunities in legacy. In D. G. Creamer & C. R. Dassance (Eds.), *Opportunities for student development in two-year colleges* (pp. 1-20). NASPA Monograph

Series, volume 6. Washington DC: National Association of Student Personnel Administrations.

Doucette, D. (1993). Transforming teaching and learning using information technology: Community college leadership in higher education. *The College Board Review*, No. 167 (Spring), pp. 18-26.

Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) Information Bulletin (1991, Summer). *Improving the recruitment and retention of minority students in the community college*, pp. 1-6. University of California, Los Angeles: ERIC Clearinghouse for Junior Colleges.

Ewell, P. T., & Boyer, C. M. (1988). Acting out state-mandated assessment. *Change, 9*, pp. 41-47.

Fidler, P. P. (1991). Relationship of freshman orientation seminars to sophomore return rates. *Journal of The Freshman Year Experience, 3*(1), 7-38.

Fidler, P., & Fidler, D. S. (1991). *First national survey on freshman seminar programs: Findings, conclusions, and recommendations*. (Monograph Series No. 6). National Resource Center for The Freshman Year Experience. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina.

Fitts, C. T., & Swift, F. H. (1928). The construction of orientation courses for college freshmen. *University of California Publications in Education, 1897-1929, 3*(3), 145-250.

Freund, W. H. (1988). *Trends in minority enrollment in higher education, Fall 1976-Fall 1986*. Research report. Office of Educational Research and Improvement. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

Gardner, J. (1981). Developing faculty as facilitators and mentors. In V. A. Harren, M. N. Daniels, & J. N. Buck (Eds.), *Facilitating students' career development*. New Directions for Student Services, No. 14. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Helfgot, S. R. (1986). Opportunities in diversity. In D. G. Creamer & C. R. Dassance (Eds.), *Opportunities for student development in two-year colleges* (pp. 21-36). NASPA Monograph Series, volume 6. Washington, DC: National Association of Student Personnel Administrators.

Ketkar, K., & Bennett, S. D. (1989). Strategies for evaluating freshman orientation programs. *Journal of The Freshman Year Experience, 1*(1), 33-44.

Lenning, O. T., Sauer, K., & Beal, P. E. (1980). *Student retention strategies*. ASHE/ERIC Higher Education Research Report No. 8. Washington, DC: The George Washington University, School of Education and Human Development.

Marchese, T. J. (1991). TQM reaches the academy. *AAHE Bulletin, 44*(3), pp. 3-9.

Medsker, L. L., & Tillery, D. (1971). *Breaking the access barriers: A profile of two-year colleges*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Parnell, D. (1986). *The neglected majority*. Washington, DC: Community College Press.

Pascarella, E. T., & Terenzini, P. T. (1991). *How college affects students: Findings and insights from twenty years of research*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Rice, R. L. (1992). *Shaping mentoring behaviors in faculty: A course of action*. Paper presented at the annual conference of The Freshman Year Experience, Columbia, South Carolina.

Roueche, S. D., & Roueche, J. E. (1993). *Between a rock and a hard place: The at-risk student in the open door college*. Washington, DC: The Community College Press.

Strumpf, G., & Hunt, P. (1993). The effects of an orientation course on the retention and academic standing of entering freshmen, controlling for the volunteer effect. *Journal of The Freshman Year Experience, 5*(1), 7-14.

Tighe, D. J. (Ed.). (1977). *Poet on the moon: A dialogue on liberal education in the community college*. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges. (ERIC Reproduction No. 145 870)

Tinto, V. (1987). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (1987). In U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstracts of the United States* (107th edition), pp. 385-386.

Wilkie, C., & Kuckuck, S. (1989). A longitudinal study of the effects of a freshman seminar. *Journal of The Freshman Year Experience, 1*(1), 7-16.

Chapter 8

The Politics of Creating and Maintaining a College Success Course

Douglas A. Kenny

In Chapter 1, Joseph Hankin and John Gardner wrote about a paradigm shift that affects The Freshman Year Experience concept. Paradigms, perspectives, unwritten rules, and assumptions which direct our thinking and consequently our behavior may be the engines of change, or as Barker (1990) suggests, may be a cause for paralysis.

Creating change in a complex organization is a lesson in politics that includes the process of examining existing paradigms, the creation of new paradigms, and the allocation of resources to support the paradigm shift. Maintaining the shift requires documentation to demonstrate that the new way of thinking is taking the organization where it wants to go, and that continued allocation of scarce resources is justified.

Using the creation of a "College Success" course as a case history, it is possible to see the interaction of paradigms and politics. Westchester Community College began its College Success course in the fall of 1987 with three sections. Five years later 25 sections were offered. The course began with faculty and administrators coming together to ask questions of how higher education was doing business. We began to examine some paradigms. Historically, many professionals in higher education assumed that young people, particularly those right out of high school, came to college prepared to play to win in the college game. Even with the adoption of the "open door policy," college decision makers clung to the idea that during the summer months their recent high school seniors went through some metamorphosis that changed them from high school neophytes to able, ready college students aiming for success. Many assumed that these students left behind their bad habits, self-defeating belief systems, stresses, strains, and other unwanted baggage from 12 years in elementary, middle, and secondary schools. Even those decision makers in higher education who recognized that the transition may be difficult must have assumed that it would somehow take care of itself. Some of them were indifferent, using attrition figures as an indication they were maintaining standards. How else can we explain so many years without an organized academic experience to ease the transition from high school to college? If it is possible to teach students calculus, accounting, biology, and an appreciation for British literature, why can we not we teach them how to succeed in the college game? Helping students create their personal success would go a long way to facilitate the

feelings of "institutional fit" which Tinto (1987) argues are important for retention.

The need to teach students how to be successful in college may be justified on the basis of many humanitarian arguments. However, what gets the attention of decision makers at the college level is "attrition," or "retention" if the positive approach is more desirable. Concerned faculty, administrators, and trustees take careful notice of retention statistics, particularly when enrollment is going down. Falling enrollment, loss of state aid and student tuition, and the elimination of departments and faculty positions have the effect of forcing people to examine their paradigms. And so the economic climate in higher education has forced us to examine our paradigms and create new programs to meet the needs created by changing times.

Steps In Creating Successful Programs

For purposes of structure the following steps are offered in the process of creating and maintaining new student programs, and while these steps follow the Westchester Community College experience with the adoption of a credit-bearing "College Success" course, they have broader application to the creation and maintenance of other new programs for first-year students:

1. The first step in the politics of creating and maintaining new programs is to find a person (or persons), who is (are) motivated to question the contemporary wisdom. Frequently, the creation of need is the disclosure that all is not well. Change comes from the desire to do better and belief that it is possible to do so. Ideally, an advocate must surface or be assigned. This advocate must be perceived by the faculty and administration as a reasonable person, must have persuasive skills, and must be tenacious in the face of adversity. This advocate will initiate the process of questioning and will generate and guide energy toward the development of new approaches to opportunities disclosed by the questioning process.

2. The advocate must ask, "What are we doing, why are we doing it, and can we do it better? Are our needs and the needs of those we serve being met by how we conduct business? Are our existing attitudes, beliefs, and methods getting us where we want to go?" These questions are basic in the development of programs to enhance the education of first-year students (Upcraft & Gardner, 1989).

3. The advocate may not function as a lone voice, and therefore must get others, both faculty and administrators, involved in the questioning and identification, design, and implementation of the new program. Committees are a fact of life on any campus and may not be avoided. However, committee membership need not be haphazard, and the need for early creation of a committee consisting of supportive people, with power in their individual departments, is extremely important. Because such a new program must have academic committee approval, the advocate would be wise to form an ad hoc group that works with the academic committee to facilitate the approval process.

4. Identify the source of power in the campus decision-making process and lobby. Assuming that the questions have been asked and answered and a new program has been sketched out to answer the need(s) identified, it is important to get early commitment of support from wherever the power lies. The best program in the world, designed for the best reasons possible, is doomed unless the powers that be have signed on to the program. The program need not be a finished product to gain early approval. Why spend a lot of time and effort presenting a finished program only to have it fail for lack of commitment, e.g. resource allocation? Early commitment by those with power to make decisions is essential.

5. Seek student support. Assuming that the new program is in the best interest of the students, engage them, involve them in the development. They have good ideas and ask difficult questions; the outcomes will be enhanced by their suggestions and support.

A strong student endorsement will carry weight on the day the faculty vote to endorse or reject the new program.

6. Identify those elements of the college community that will gain from the new program. Self-interest is still a major motivator, and those who stand to win from the adoption of the new program should be clearly identified and encouraged to endorse the program. These individuals will become allies in the process of gaining approval. Assuming the new program somehow increases the tendency for students to succeed, the program is in everyone's best interest. Because resource allocation will surely become an issue and assuming no new resources will be allocated to the college to fund the new program, small amounts taken from all departments may be an effective argument if all departments stand to gain.

7. The new course will need to be housed in an academic department, to give it a home, and the interdisciplinary nature of the course should be stressed to ease acceptance by the academic community. As such, it may be taught by faculty in all departments once they have received training in the goals and philosophy of the course. In this way the course does not become part of the "turf" of any one department but will draw faculty from many departments. This is a major strength and will engender broad support of faculty during the process of creating and implementing the course.

8. Because the new program will undoubtedly have to be approved by the faculty, usually through the vote of a governing body such as a faculty senate, supporters must be counted prior to the day of the vote. Three categories may be established: (a) those you can count on, (b) those who are undecided and want to be persuaded, (c) those who are against the new proposal. Because time and resources are limited, persuasive efforts should be directed at the middle group, those who must be convinced of the correctness of the new program. Do not waste time trying to convince the intransigent. Efforts to educate a closed mind usually are exercises in futility.

9. An excellent tactic is a call for the new program to be started as a pilot program to be evaluated after a specific period. On the basis of the evaluation, the program may be reconsidered. If the program is valid, that is to say that it is doing what it is intended to do, there will be little trouble continuing it. If, upon evaluation, it is not doing what it is supposed to do, it should be eliminated.

10. As a part of the proposal, determine procedures to evaluate the program. Assessment, whether or not it is of a pilot program, should be built into the proposal. Not only will this disarm opposition, but it will keep program designers focused and will generally enhance program credibility.

11. In the creation of a college success course, the issue that will be most questioned by both friend and foe alike is that of content, or "academic integrity." This is fortuitous because course content is the major strength of a college success course and should be the issue upon which the question of course credit is decided. From a political perspective, a focus on course content allows proponents to argue from a position of strength.

12. The politics of course credit have been argued at every college which has initiated or considered a college success course. The institution says something about the value of a course when it assigns credit, and students are quick to recognize the message. If anyone doubts this, attempt to advise a student to take a remedial course that is noncredit. Most students reject such an idea. It is also relevant to note that faculty teaching noncredit courses are frequently paid less than for credit courses. Is this because noncredit courses are considered less worthy, or require less student or faculty preparation? If so, is this the message we want to send to students and their parents when we recommend a course which should be taken seriously, attended regularly, and allocated time from a busy schedule to master a specific body of knowledge?

The rationale for the adoption of a college success course rests on the premise that the quality of the first college year may be substantially improved by teaching students specific strategies that lead to success. These strategies are clearly defined in the literature on success developed by behavioral scientists and others interested in the subject of success. Content in a college success course comes from material gleaned from disciplines such as psychology, sociology, management, finance, engineering, statistics, philosophy, and the pure sciences. When this is pointed out to faculty members in those disciplines, more often than not, support for the course is forthcoming.

The goal of the course itself–by its design and content–is the creation of an academically positive environment that fosters learning and intellectual growth; course content and design must not be politicized according to the agenda of a particular department, program, or instructor. The following list of typical course material is not meant to be complete, but merely illustrative. It is content that could be covered in a three-credit semester course although some would consider the list very ambitious. The interdisciplinary nature of the course content becomes obvious when content and process are considered.

Components of Successful Course

To fit into the organization it is important for students to understand the structure of a complex organization, how they are expected to interact with that structure, services offered by the organization, and the characteristics of students who have successfully negotiated the system. Outcomes, or what happens to graduates, provide incentives for commitment when economic theory, such as supply and demand as it relates to employment, is considered. The relationship between education, employment, upward mobility, credentials, and money come through loud and clear for most students. The message is that in our increasingly competitive world economy, people are playing in a new game of survival of the fittest; they need to understand how the game is played, know the incentives for successful play, and recognize the consequences of unsuccessful play.

Game theory. Game theory is an important subject because many athletes find their way to college success courses, and they relate particularly well to the content of game theory, as do most students. Game theory, in simple terms, involves the following:

1. There are many games available. Decide which one you want to play.
2. Determine the costs and benefits of game play.
3. Determine your level of commitment. This is usually a function of what the player has to win or lose.
4. Determine the rules of the game, both written and unwritten.
5. Determine how well equipped you are to play the game competitively.
6. Make the decision to play or to walk away. If the decision is to play, continue down the list. If the decision is not to play, find another game you may play successfully.
7. Develop a game plan.
8. Apply the written and unwritten rules to your behavior.
9. Assess performance on a regular basis and modify game plan as necessary. Actively seek feedback on performance.
10. Reconsider level of commitment and review incentives.
11. Sharpen skills and seek help when necessary. Remember, coaches may help, but may not run the plays for you.
12. Allow for luck, but don't count on it.

Game theory may become a framework for the course. With this foundation, course content becomes logical, reasonable, and pertinent.

Values clarification. It is important for students to determine why they have chosen to play in the

college game. Commitment to a course of action for a finite period of time will be a function of this kind of critical thinking (Vaughan, 1992).

Assessment. In any game, participants should carefully and periodically review not only their play of the game, but also their possession of, or access to, skills and equipment that the experience of others has shown is necessary for successful play of the game. Personal assessment, the appreciation of feedback, and willingness to change their thinking and behavior depending on outcomes are all essential components of successful game play.

Management by objective (MBO). One of Peter Drucker's many contributions to management theory is a critical part of any college success course. MBO principles may be applied to personal management and provide a vehicle to demonstrate the relationship between goals, planning, and payoff. Goals, a plan, measurable objectives, feedback, obstacle identification, and their interaction are valuable course content when helping students increase their probability of success.

Prediction of outcomes. How do you predict what has not yet occurred? Who would be interested in predicting the future? Can it be done? If so, with what precision can it be accomplished? Using the tools of statistics and probability, and gaining appreciation for control of variables, students become aware they really have the ability to predict their future.

Management of scarce resources. Successful people and organizations recognize that time is a scarce resource and as such must be carefully managed. Identification of commitments, time allocation, and the return-versus-allocation ratio are essential to success in many endeavors, particularly business, and the business of higher education.

Need to achieve. Research demonstrates that people with a low need to achieve can learn to behave like those with a high need to achieve; and when they begin to exhibit those behavioral characteristics, they begin to achieve at a higher rate. A look at McClelland's work (1961) on this subject is beneficial for students interested in increasing their success potential.

The role of control. Behavioral scientists have determined that the individual's belief that he or she has some degree of control over his or her life is a key ingredient in both physical and emotional health. Understanding theory regarding locus of control (Rotter, 1966) helps the player take responsibility for his or her play of the game.

Health and wellness. Substance abuse and accidents are frequently related and are major threats to college students. The irresponsible use of alcohol to cope with the stresses of college are considered by many to be major causes for failure in the college game. Helping students begin to consider their relationship with alcohol and other drugs as well as learning effective ways to deal with stress must be a part of any college success class. The development and spread of AIDS has taken the threat of sexually transmitted diseases to a deadly level. Violence in our society, particularly among young people, is also a health threat that must be considered.

Learning and memory theory. Learning and memory skills are keys to good grades, and good grades, for better or worse, are considered by many to be a highly significant measure of success in college. These skills are based upon learning theory which is supported by extensive research. The application of theory to practice in the area of reading, note taking, test taking, and related memory skills may help students increase their effectiveness, use of time, and potential for success in the college game.

Communication and relationships. It is important for students to recognize the value of effective communication with fellow students and faculty because communication forms the basis of relationships. Knowledge and application of communication theory can help students not only increase their communication skills, but assist them in developing effective relationships with other players in the college game, particularly faculty.

Career development. Many students come to college with no idea of career goals, nor even what a career is. Many come struggling with the question of what they will do for the rest of their lives.

A career development component in this course may help students consider the concept of a career as a developmental process, one essential step in becoming a thinking, productive human being.

Critical thinking. Critical thinking is a popular subject in higher education. If we look at any definition of that subject, a college success course offers practical lessons in the process of critical thinking. It asks students to pose questions and seek answers, to identify issues in clear and concrete terms, to examine evidence, to analyze assumptions and biases, to avoid emotional reasoning, to avoid oversimplification, to consider alternative explanations, and to tolerate uncertainty.

As the previous topics are incorporated into the context of a college success course, course content becomes a powerful argument and magnet for support as members of various disciplines see the value of their work in the course. In fact, the most enthusiastic supporters of the course are faculty in disciplines from which the content is derived. Course content solves the political problem of gaining strong support among colleagues. While it is true that some academics believe their subject is the only one with integrity, most are reasonable and, when confronted with the kind of content cited above, will not only support the course, but frequently will want to teach it.

The major issue in the debate over whether college success courses are worthy of credit should center on course goals and content. The New York State Education Department's position on granting credit, in general, may be summarized this way: If the content of a course covers course material which is a fundamental part of the New York State High School Equivalency Examination, it must be considered remedial/developmental and will not be approved for credit. Study skills courses are sometimes questioned, but are not by definition automatically judged unworthy of credit. Beyond these restrictions, the definition of what is worthy of credit, and how much credit, will be left to the discretion of the institution's faculty and administration. In that case credit should be based upon content, contact hours, and the amount of work required by students to accomplish course goals. The less credit offered, the less material can be covered and the less can be demanded of students. The material outlined above not only provides the political support necessary to create the course, but also dictates the allocation of credit.

The previously numbered set of 12 steps for creating a successful program cover the most difficult part which is getting a new program up and running. Maintaining it will be easier, assuming it is accomplishing the goals which justified its initiation, and also assuming there has not been an institutional paradigm shift which leaves the program behind.

As mentioned previously, a method to assess the program should be a part of the original proposal. From a political perspective, the inclusion of an assessment method in the original proposal will disarm critics, and if the program is to be run as a pilot, an assessment method is essential when the program is to be reconsidered. An assessment method also serves the practical cause of requiring architects of the new program to set out clearly measurable goals and objectives. Maintaining the program to a large degree is a function of demonstrating that the program continues to meet its goals.

Maintenance of the program also requires that a body of support not only be established to get the program up and running, but to continue to support it in an environment when many claims on limited resources are being made. Programs which increase the probability of student success are relatively easy to maintain if they are effective — back to the need for assessment. In terms of maintaining support for a college success course, the best advocates are the faculty who teach the course. They are most knowledgeable regarding course content, see that it is relevant, understand the content has integrity, and see student evaluations of the course.

Summary

The politics of creating and maintaining new student programs are both frustrating and challenging. Creating credit-bearing college success courses has become easier over the years as more

colleges initiated them and conducted the research necessary to justify their creation and continuation (Barefoot & Fidler, 1996). The basic tasks in establishing new programs remain the same:

1. Examine the paradigms which direct institutional business.
2. Question the status quo and redefine needs.
3. Design programs that meet needs and have measurable goals and objectives.
4. Determine ways to assess effectiveness.
5. Create a powerful argument for adoption.
6. Work actively to generate support with institutional decision makers. To "lobby" is not sinful.
7. Clearly identify those who will benefit from the program and enlist their support.
8. Create a base of support, not only during initiation, but as the program evolves.
9. Use experts to further the cause as well as the experience of others.
10. Recognize student performance with college credit.
11. Use student input and opinion.
12. Use results to keep the program high on the institutional priority list.
13. Watch for institutional paradigm shifts.

References

Barefoot, B., & Fidler, P. (1996). *The 1994 national survey of freshman seminar programs: Continuing innovations in the collegiate curriculum.* (Monograph No. 20). Columbia, SC: The National Resource Center for The Freshman Year Experience & Students in Transition, University of South Carolina.

Barker, J. A. (1990). *Discovering the future: The business of paradigms, film/video.* Burnsville, MN: Charthouse International.

McClelland, D.C. (1961). *The achieving society.* Princeton, NJ: Van Nostrand.

Rotter, J. B. (1966) Generalized expectancies for internal versus external control of reinforcement. *Psychological Monographs, 80*(1, Whole No. 609).

Tinto, V. (1987). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Vaughan, G. (1992). *Dilemmas of leadership: Decision making and ethics in the community college.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Suggested Readings

Astin, A. W. (1992). *What matters in college? Four critical years revisited.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Barefoot, B. (Ed.). (1993). *Exploring the evidence: Reporting outcomes of freshman seminars* (Monograph No. 11). Columbia, SC: The National Resource Center for The Freshman Year Experience, University of South Carolina.

David, L. M. (1988). *Gaining faculty and administrative support for student success courses,* (2nd ed.). Rapid City, SD: College Survival.

Gordon, V. N., & Grites, T. J. (1984). The freshman seminar course: Helping students succeed. *Journal of College Student Personnel, 25,* 4.

Kenny, D. A. (1992). A rationale for granting academic credit for college success courses. *SUNY Colleague.* Albany: State University of New York.

Pascarella, E. T., Smart, J. C., & Ethington, C. A. (1986). Long-term persistence of the two-year college student. *Research in Higher Education, 24*(1), 47-71.

Pascarella, E. T., & Terenzini, P. T. (1991). ***How college affects students: Findings and insight from twenty years of research.*** San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Tinto, V. (1993). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition* (2nd ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Tinto, V., Goodsell Love A., & Russo, P. (1994). *Building community among new college students.* University Park, PA: National Center on Postsecondary Teaching, Learning and Assessment, Pennsylvania State University.

Tinto, V., & Russo, P. (1994). Coordinated studies programs: The effect on student involvement at a community college. *Community College Review,* 22(2), 84-93.

Tinto, V., Russo, P., & Kadel, S. (1994, February/March). Constructing educational communities. *AACC Journal,* 26-29.

Upcraft, M. L., & Gardner, J. N. (Eds.). (1989). *The freshman year experience: Helping students survive and succeed in college.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Chapter 9

Those Who Tempt Fate and Those Who Advise Them: Designing Strategies for Serving Underprepared Students

John E. Roueche & Suanne D. Roueche

. . . I just let it happen. And I think now that fate is shaped half by expectation, half by inattention.

— Amy Tan, *The Joy Luck Club*

Increasing numbers of elementary and secondary school districts have been grappling with many of the same difficult questions that have been facing institutions of higher education for several decades. When faced with mounting public questions, such as "Why are so many students dropping out?" and "Why are graduates so poorly prepared for college or the workplace?" all levels of education are beginning to publicly discuss credible responses, as well as efforts to halt and reverse the current decline exacerbated by what many describe as a dramatic failure to reform our educational systems. Interestingly, one of the most heated issues in those discussions has been the appropriate terminology — how should educational institutions refer to those students whose academic and economic situations make them unlikely candidates for success in junior high, high school, or college?

Recently, for example, in the capital of a large southwestern state, a city with multiple universities and a community college, the public independent school district wrote letters to the parents of children who met at-risk criteria established by the district (e.g., excessive absenteeism and poor grades) to warn them that if their children followed their established patterns of behavior, the consequences were potentially serious. These parents were told that their children had been identified as "at-risk" and were likely candidates for eventual dropout status or for major academic difficulty. The result was a virtual firestorm of parental protest, with claims that the district was assigning negative labels to their children. One parent, in an interview on the evening news, observed that she certainly did not understand why the district would have identified her child as at-risk, for the only problem her child had was that "she didn't go to school as often as she should." This parent had obviously missed the point.

Moreover, colleges have long wrestled with the titles for programs and courses that provide "preparatory," "remedial," or "developmental" instruction in basic skills in an attempt to escape the history or the baggage or the negative connotations that are associated with such terms — more than 40 such terms exist in the current literature — and to put the best face or the most positive spin on the experiences that

await the student. In addition, many argue that spending good money on "bad students" is a questionable expenditure of shrinking funds and dwindling fund sources.

While a strong argument may be made that labels are inherently unfair and unnecessary, the argument may be compared to fiddling while Rome burns — present situations demand that institutions identify students who need special attention before they disappear from educational institutions, only to reappear on welfare rolls, in prisons, or in low-paying, unproductive jobs. Using terms that most clearly identify an array of conditions that threaten student success and thereby most clearly focus on potential improvements of those conditions appears to be an appropriate strategy. For example, in *Between a Rock and a Hard Place: The At-Risk Student in the Open-Door College*, a status report on college responses to at-risk students that includes a description of selected exemplary community college programs, we describe the *at-risk* student as one whose academic, social, and economic conditions — e.g., poor academic preparation and study skills, financial needs, family and job responsibilities, and poor self-esteem, among other characteristics — guarantee failure if there are no appropriate interventions (Roueche & Roueche, 1993). But had we focused solely on the students' academic histories and present performance levels and on institutional strategies for attending to those particular characteristics, we more likely would have applied the term *underprepared*.

Clearly, no resolution to this argument about labeling will be reached in the foreseeable future, and more likely it should be set aside for another time when an easing of the present difficult conditions allows such luxury. Rather, for the present, there should be a declaration and an agreement that labels be used for the sole purpose of designing efficient and effective strategies for improving the conditions that they describe and the chances for student academic success. Therefore, for purposes of this chapter, *at-risk* — which identifies a complex array of mitigating conditions — will be trimmed to a more manageable focus on (a) the academic conditions that describe and identify *underprepared* students whose low competency levels in the basic skills and limited experiences in the academic setting seriously undermine their chances for academic success; and (b) an array of strategies that have been found critical to the improvement of those chances.

A Snapshot of Underprepared Students

In 1991, the National Center for Education Statistics reported that, in tests of mathematical progress, more than one-third of all students tested performed at levels *below the lowest identified level*, and that more than 80% were functioning below their appropriate grade level in math (National Center for Educational Statistics, 1991). And, in a recent survey of university professors from 13 nations and Hong Kong, no nation had a majority of respondents agree that undergraduates had adequate mathematics skills, and only 15% of the U. S. professors agreed that students were adequately prepared, "the lowest of any nation" (Mooney, 1994, p. A35). Reports in current literature on literacy levels now commonly support the notion that the overwhelming majority of high school students are not presently required to demonstrate acceptable skills levels and that there are unconscionably few reading, writing, and problem-solving tasks required in our nation's schools. Moreover, in the aforementioned international survey, only 20% of U. S. professors agreed that undergraduates were adequately prepared in written and oral communication (Mooney, 1994, p. A35). Finally, dropout rates continue to climb as national high school dropout data indicate that one of every four students will drop out of school prior to graduation; some reports indicate that one of every two students who begin the first grade in an urban area will not graduate, with more than 50% of those students leaving before the seventh grade.

A Collage of Successful Strategies

The last 25 years of research have produced a collage of common elements of exemplary programs for improving the academic performance of the underprepared student. From that decades-long perspective, combined with an updated report on successful program strategies, Roueche and Roueche (1993) concluded with recommendations of 14 institutional policies and

procedures; eight were designed to affect academic performance most directly. They, along with current examples from this and other recent studies, are included here.

Pre-enrollment activities should include assessment testing and supplemental instruction. In addition to special recruitment activities that pique potential students' interest in going to college and, further, in special programs, colleges discover that early academic interventions reduce or eliminate the surprise that skill assessment tests and course requirements may create. Moreover, they may identify academic weaknesses early on and begin work to improve them prior to college enrollment, often eliminating one or more semesters of required preparatory work. For example, in Florida, Miami-Dade Community College's Black Student Opportunity Program targets students early in their high school years, as early as the ninth grade, counseling them about appropriate courses and offering supplemental instruction to achieve the required skill level competencies for college work. South Mountain Community College (AZ) urges students in its service area as young as sixth grade to identify themselves as potential SMCC students, and the college then monitors their courses and the grades they achieve for appropriate college preparation and required courses, as well as allowing them to "bank" the tuition credits that they earn with good grades in their courses. These students may then "cash" their credits upon college enrollment, many having earned a sufficient number of credits to reduce significantly the cost of their college education.

Orientation to the institution should be a required activity. Orientation to college is a critical entryway, a "leveling of the playing field" for students whose academic experiences are limited. Unfortunately, community colleges fall short of the standards set by the majority of four-year colleges and universities; many community colleges have brief, voluntary orientation programs that do little to enculturate new students to the expectations and the demands of college life (Roueche, Baker, & Roueche, 1984). A number of community colleges have no formal orientation at all. However, many others have established mandatory orientation activities that acquaint new students with current and former experienced students, with faculty and administrators, and with college policies and services. Some colleges plan their activities over several days or a full week; others keep the orientation experience alive during the entire first semester as students are required to enroll in semester-long courses that explore the questions students have and the demands they are experiencing over a period of sufficient length to give the abundance of new information time to "gel." Finally, colleges use these orientation activities and classes to create lasting mentor and tutor relationships between new and former students, between students and faculty.

In California, students choosing to enter De Anza College's "A Starting Point" program must attend two separate orientation courses — one course is a one-unit, four-day, 24-hour class with a focus on transfer-related and college survival information. Santa Barbara City College's (CA) Transfer Achievement Program requires an initial orientation of its incoming students, continues with aggressive testing and course placement procedures, then maintains an up-to-date data bank of financial and academic support resources and available options. Santa Fe Community College (NM) begins its orientation the moment a prospective student inquires about enrolling, providing a smooth transition to college and the skills necessary to succeed there. It requires two college success courses for all new, degree-seeking students. SFCC observes that a "one-shot" approach to orientation does not provide the breadth and depth of support and service that most new students — who, like the majority of students in American community colleges, are first-generation learners — require. Lord Fairfax Community College (VA) provides a "keys to success" handbook for all entering students; furthermore, it acquaints its faculty and staff involved in mentoring and orientation with the latest information on advisement and intervention strategies. Suffolk Community College (NY) requires incoming students to complete an initial orientation, followed by freshman seminar classes (required of all full-time students) designed to develop such academic success skills as time management, note taking, reading, testing, and using resources. Adirondack Community College (NY) has developed four freshman-year orientation options.

Two of these options are the Freshman Seminar required of first-time, full-time nontransfer students, which develops skill-building strategies and mentor-adviser relationships; and the College Survival Option, a course for students with weak academic background that, taken with entry-level courses, focuses on building academic self-confidence. The thrust of these college initiatives is to establish for students a foundation upon which the college community can help them build a strong social and academic structure.

Late registration should be abolished. If teachers begin teaching on the first day of class and students are engaged in learning from that time forward, then the first days, the first week of any academic term are the most important and critical of the year. This is the time that students get involved with the course and the teacher and get excited about the content and the activities of the course. Yet, many colleges allow students to register late and enter classes after important introductory instruction, critical orientation, and socialization activities have occurred. Abolishing what many would consider a "tradition," however, continues to be a thorny issue for colleges to confront; abolishing late registration sparks arguments that the financial repercussions are too costly. Many colleges may document that more than 25% of their total student body registers late each semester — a significant potential loss of revenue *if* those who register late will choose not to register in a more timely fashion. Others argue that there are too few data to support the notion that late registration affects student performance, that we do not yet know for sure that this variable is so critical to student success. Yet, faculty go on record frequently to urge administrators and registrars to stop creating a "mission impossible" for them and for the students by allowing late-registering students to walk into their classrooms one, two, or as late as three weeks into an academic term.

It is important to note that the colleges that have chosen to reduce late registration days to one or two, and particularly those that have chosen to abolish late registration altogether, cite several reasons for changing their registration policy. Many note that they first considered abolishing late registration (a) when their attrition data began to climb, many citing losses of 20-25%, and frequently higher, of their student body each term; (b) when they looked at dropout data, investigating potential links between times that students registered and began classes and when they dropped out (data generated for individual courses and programs); and (c) when they collected data regarding nonproductive grades (D, F, NC, W, and Incomplete) and determined the percentage of the students earning such grades who also had registered late. These investigations gave them evidence with which to consider elements of cause and effect. Admittedly, poor performance and dropping out are not simple problems; reasons for both are complex. But analyzing similar data may help college administrators determine if the attrition and poor performance they witness might be positively affected in some way that they may effectively manage. For those colleges that choose not to abandon totally the notion of late registration, that period should be the week before classes begin and should end when the first class period commences. Students will enroll when the college catalog and schedule of events indicate that they should.

Seminole Community College in Florida recently circulated data through its faculty teaching newsletter regarding its students who registered during the add-drop period, another period of late registration. After providing data over three terms about the range and percentage of grades earned by all students who registered late, the question was posed to the faculty: "A point of discussion for faculty and counselors — are the differences in percentages enough to warrant changes in the registration procedures?" While the answer is not decided at this date, it will be driven by an important question: What attrition and performance figures are we administering, teaching, and counseling professionals willing to accept?

The colleges Roueche and Roueche (1993) featured in *Between a Rock and a Hard Place* were not surveyed about late registration; however, it is clear from the majority of program descriptions that their students are involved with the college, program directors, and teachers long before the first day of classes. From their practices of early

selection and mandatory orientation, it is evident that registration is conducted in a timely fashion and that late registration is not an acceptable practice. Many other colleges, including Moraine Valley Community College in Illinois have data that document improved student performance and lowered attrition after ending the policy of late registration; other colleges, including Santa Fe Community College in New Mexico, and Cowley County Community College in Kansas, have more recently implemented this policy, a response to unacceptable levels of attrition and student performance. In each case, college personnel admitted they had wrestled with the initial questions about perceived financial loss and potential effects on student performance. And in each, they agreed that evidence was mounting from numerous sources in support of gathering appropriate data for sound decision making and implementing at least a nonbinding, trial test of the policy change.

Basic skills assessment and placement should be mandatory. If results of basic skills assessment tests indicate unacceptable levels of development, colleges should place students earning these scores in appropriate preparatory courses. Many states, including Texas, Florida, and New Jersey, require entry-level assessment by law, followed by appropriate remedial/developmental instruction. Colleges in those states currently are documenting improved student persistence and achievement. Presently, more and more state legislatures are discussing and many are enacting legislation that will tie funding for their colleges to *appropriate* assessment and placement measures, *measurable* tests of effectiveness of basic skills courses, and *acceptable* student performance in the follow-on courses for which the basic skills courses serve a preparatory function.

At Illinois Central College, participants in the QUEST program must agree to complete any remedial work that their assessment scores indicate they need prior to enrolling in related college-level work. At Santa Fe Community College, all students, with a few exceptions, must take the Course Placement Evaluation (CPE) to determine their skill levels and be placed in appropriate courses. The CPE establishes whether or not they have met prerequisites for the courses they wish to take; it is required of all students planning to enroll in any math, English, science, or business course; register for more than seven credit hours; or declare a degree or certificate objective. Midlands Technical College in South Carolina has implemented a Student Orientation for Success program, with an intervention system designed to advise, place, and counsel students from their first days on campus. Furthermore, its high school assessment, placement, and entry services are reasons that "30% of all college-bound high school graduates in the greater Columbia area" seek enrollment at the college (Roueche & Roueche, 1994, p. 31).

Community colleges trail universities in their commitment to entry-level assessment and placement. Universities have held traditionally to the notion that they have the right and responsibility to direct students to appropriate sources of support and to actively assist student selection of acceptable academic options. It is evident, however, that increasing numbers of entities outside of our colleges are bringing inescapable pressure to bear on community and four-year colleges to become more serious about that commitment.

Dual enrollment in basic skill and regular academic courses should be prohibited. One of the most successful program elements identified by the majority of exemplary programs was prohibiting students from taking courses in which they would be required to perform at skill competency levels that they could not yet demonstrate. For example, Middlesex Community College in Massachusetts requires mandatory placement in reading, writing, and mathematics courses; and, moreover, it has established pre- and co-requisites for all college-level courses in which reading, writing, and math skills are required. The University of Toledo Community and Technical College (ComTech) in Ohio requires both assessment and placement and has established a system by which the appropriateness of student preparation is monitored: All nondevelop-mental courses require a *prerequisite course* or *waiver* by test or transfer credit; nondevelop-mental math courses have specified *math* prerequisites; science courses have *reading* prerequisites; some science courses have both *reading* and *math* prerequisites.

Rigorous placement in English, reading, and math courses is diluted significantly, if not rendered totally ineffective, by an institutional policy that allows dual enrollment in basic skills and regular academic courses. Basic skills courses that provide appropriate developmental instruction are critical to student success in follow-on courses. A recent study conducted of *competency-based* developmental mathematics courses and entry-level mathematics courses at Austin Community College in Texas produced significant findings over a three-year period — involving 2,000 students — that have critical implications for enrollment practices: (a) student performance in the developmental course is a strong indicator of performance in the entry-level course, and (b) students successfully completing the developmental course should enroll in the entry-level course as soon as possible, avoiding the "stop-out" phenomenon (Johnson, 1993). Recommendations based upon the findings included the suggestions that colleges require students to be continuously enrolled in sequential program tracks until they have reached their objectives and that they not allow students to proceed along that track if their performance ceases to demonstrate mastery of the prerequisite work. Moreover, the study concluded that the critical positive relationship between developmental performance and college-level work was enhanced by competency-based remediation — with grades based upon pre-agreed, departmentally established competencies.

Agreed-upon prerequisites for entry-level college courses, established by individual departments, would provide some critical controls. These prerequisites and concomitant enforcement policies would assist faculty, in particular, and all students, ultimately, by significantly reducing an impossible diversity of skills in one classroom to a more manageable and teachable number. Finally, they would establish important interventions to prevent students from enrolling inappropriately and attempting tasks for which they are not adequately prepared — significant wastes of time and effort.

Reduced academic loads should be strongly encouraged of working students. It is now common knowledge that working students must take more time to earn an associate or a baccalaureate degree; associate degrees are likely to require three or four years of work, and baccalaureates five or six (Cage, 1992). More and more students are required to work, many as much as 25, 30, or 40 hours per week. And, yet, while they must work to maintain a viable economic base for themselves or for families, they must be encouraged to limit their numbers of credit hours. Many universities, even those whose entrance requirements include strong high school GPAs and exceptional achievement test scores, and who believe that their student populations are above average in ability to handle demanding coursework and extracurricular activities concurrently, require student reports of their employment hours and then approve a limit on credit hours, seeking to impose what they deem to be an appropriate balance of employment and educational responsibilities on the student's academic tenure.

Our various exemplary programs observed that counselors and mentors advised students about appropriate combinations of work and school and established monitoring systems whereby those combinations could be evaluated at appropriate intervals. For community college students whose academic preparation levels already place them in jeopardy, reducing their credit hour load is a humane and responsible instructional policy.

Faculty mentors and peer tutors should supplement classroom instruction. Faculty mentors and peer supporters or tutors serve as a safety net for many first-generation learners; they should be volunteers to the effort, be trained for their duties, and be evaluated at appropriate intervals for their effectiveness. Illinois Central College's QUEST program provides an orientation for its students in mid-August, just before classes begin; during a full day's orientation, new students meet current students, former students, faculty and administrators in a series of informal socials and meetings designed to acquaint them with upcoming academic responsibilities and extracurricular activities. The activities continue throughout the semester in an effort to bond students to the institution and to their assigned mentors and tutors. Midland College in Texas has an established Survival Skills program for nursing students,

which includes an orientation that involves students' family members and introduces a big brother/big sister network between first- and second-year students.

Triton College in Illinois has developed a Partners in Education mentoring project in which faculty and counselors are invited to apply as mentors; even more important, they are compensated for their time and effort "based on student retention rates and evidence of achievement as measured by final GPA" (Roueche & Roueche, 1994, p. 33). Santa Barbara City College has established math support groups which encourage cooperative learning and strategy-swapping experiences between current and former selected students. And, in fact, at De Anza College, Middlesex Community College, and North Lake College, TX, programs identify student networks and facilitate the building of teaching and learning "communities" as successful features of programs for underprepared students. They refer to their networks as vehicles by which students may share their learning experiences, trade information about student "issues," and build important connections to others in the college.

Problem-solving and literacy activities should be required in all courses. Sadly, over the years, numerous widespread investigations of literacy development in community colleges have discovered that student success in preparatory courses is not always appreciated and rewarded elsewhere in those colleges — that is, the skills that have been developed and the competency levels that have been raised simply are not required in follow-on, entry-level courses in that same institution. All too often reading, writing, and problem-solving competencies are not required for successful completion of courses other than those identified as remedial or developmental.

Of the colleges Roueche and Roueche (1993) featured in *Between a Rock and a Hard Place*, perhaps Middlesex Community College most clearly demonstrates the efficacy of combining content and skills, via team teaching courses from three or more disciplines. In the freshman seminar, there is a strong emphasis on communication and interaction. Students submit journals each week to their instructors, writing on a variety of topics, and the instructors promptly write and return lengthy comments in response to the students' submissions. Individual writing projects and group projects require collaborative efforts in developing speaking and social skills.

The criticisms that colleges have a lackluster interest in reading and writing requirements in the majority of their courses is not new. However, during the past ten years, some colleges have elected to respond and to act on this criticism on their own; others have been and will be responding to the demands of outside sources, (e.g., their legislatures and community employers), that their graduates are literate and that their performance in the academic arena and in the workplace will prove them so. There is accelerated interest in required proof of performance—with state and national competency exams and college course prerequisites. Writing across the curriculum initiatives have produced various examples of increased literacy performance. For example, the Florida CLAST exam has identified, via student test scores, the colleges that have most successfully met the challenges of the increasing numbers of underprepared students.

And because students can only develop literacy and thinking skills when they are engaged in activities that demand they demonstrate them, perhaps the days of objective testing as the primary mode of evaluation of student achievement are numbered. Students must be required to think more broadly and demonstrate that they can do so. The expanding and demanding workplace will hold significant opportunities only for those who can apply information from a variety of sources and formulate useful responses to new challenges. If students have never been taught how to perform either of those tasks, colleges have abrogated one of their most serious responsibilities — to develop a literate, informed citizenry.

Conclusion

The tangle of academic underpreparedness we have created by adhering to outdated attempts to understand this problem, such as cause and effect, owes its continuation to education's willingness to look reality in the eye and deny it, and to its willingness to discuss problems endlessly

without taking real action. We must have the courage to look at this reality, but it will take more courage and determination to change it. We must say to the parents of public school youngsters that if, for example, your children continue to be frequently absent (the major criterion of at-risk status), chances are great that eventually they will be so far behind that the process of catching up will be overwhelming and potentially lead to dropping out and/or severe academic underpreparedness. Furthermore, we must remind parents that they should require their children to behave in an acceptable manner — attend school regularly, for example — and we must have the courage to enter a potential minefield created by both educators' and parents' egocentric shortsightedness.

And it will require courage and creativity of institutions of higher education to accept the challenges for which few of us were ever prepared. However, the examples of innovative practices that have been featured here, practices that reflect courage and creativity and inform good practice, provide good evidence that these are practices that work. Good money *may* be put toward the improvement of learning for what many would prefer to call "bad students"; their failure is not a given. Yet as Amy Tan wrote in *The Joy Luck Club* (1989), we may create this fate when we expect little of them or of ourselves, have our minds made up, and do nothing to intervene. If we behave in such fashion in the face of ever-increasing numbers of underpre-pared students, then we shall surely *create* our fate — but it is a fate that our social and economic future cannot survive.

References

Cage, M. C. (1992, July 15). Fewer students get bachelor's degrees in 4 years, study finds. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, A29-36.

Johnson, L. F. (1993). Relationship of performance in developmental mathematics to academic success in intermediate algebra. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Texas at Austin.

Mooney, C. J. (1994, June 22). The shared concerns of scholars. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, A35-38.

National Center for Educational Statistics. (1991). *Trends in academic progress*. Washington, DC: Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement.

Roueche, J. E., Baker, G. A., & Roueche, S. D. (1984). *College responses to low-achieving students: A report on a national study*. New York: HBJ-Media Systems, Inc.

Roueche, J. E., & Roueche, S. D. (1993). *Between a rock and a hard place: The at-risk student in the open-door college*. Washington, DC: Community College Press.

Roueche, J. E., & Roueche, S. D. (1994). Creating the climate for teaching and learning. In T. O'Banion (Ed.), *Teaching and learning in the community college* (pp. 21-40). Washington, DC: Community College Press.

Tan, A. (1989). *The Joy Luck Club*. New York: Ivy Books.

Chapter 10

The Way It Used to Be: "New" Students and The Early Public Junior College

Robert P. Pederson

To a remarkable degree, scholars concur on the broad outline of the public junior college's early history and of the place of the student in that history. As retold by Fields (1964) and Monroe (1972), this history is a simple and inspiring story of demo-cracy's triumph over the entrenched forces of social privilege. For these scholars, the junior college drew its force and direction from a fundamentally American desire "to attain a greater and greater degree of democracy in all our social arrangements" (Fields, 1964, p. 19). As free and proximate, this history argues, the junior college effectively broke the control of America's elite classes upon higher education and, in the process, provided America's disadvantaged youth with unprecedented access to higher education. Today's community college, with its deep commitment to provide a wide range of pedagogical and support services specifically tailored to the needs of the "first generation" freshman is, for these historians, simply the mature expression of the progressive spirit that informed and invigorated the early junior colleges of Kansas, California, Iowa and Texas.

For the community college's modern-day advocates, there is much that is comforting in this history. After all, it aligns the community college with the most progressive and democratic sentiments of the American people. This history also answers the allegations of the so-called critics that the "true" purpose of the two-year college has been to divert lower class students from the university, inducing these vulnerable youth into occupations of little prestige and less opportunity (Karabel, 1972). But most importantly, this history not only provides an important rhetorical prop to the "open door" policies now embraced by today's community college advocates, it also offers a rationale for the broad array of support services that community colleges have made available to their new students in the name of the "open door." History itself, these advocates may argue, reveals that the accessible and responsive two-year college has been a vital component in democracy's progress against inherited privilege. Any challenge to the policy of the open door, or to programs based on open door, may be denounced as elitist, directly threatening America's continued development as a progressive and democratic nation through the agency of the community college.

As comforting and useful as we may find these assumptions, we are nonetheless periodically obligated to put them to the test, for assumptions are all too often a mask for inadequate evidence and flawed logic. In the particular case of the

early public junior college, we should first examine the presumption that this institution was democratic in its purposes and character. At one level, we need to determine if the historical record corroborates the popular opinion that the students who attended junior colleges before 1930 were in fact "new." Simply put, was their academic preparation and social status inferior to the preparation and status of those who attended the elite colleges of the East or one of the great public universities of the mid and far west? At a second, and more important level, we must also determine if the governing boards of the early public junior colleges took specific steps to promote the access of "new" students. Did these boards relax traditional admissions requirements, lower the costs of attendance, or authorize programs and services responsive to the special needs of first generation freshmen? In short, was the early junior college, like today's community college, transformational in its purposes and effects, or did it only serve to confirm the social inequalities of early 20th century America?

Were Early Junior College Students "New"?

Prevailing assumptions about the social composition of America's colleges and universities before 1930 are grounded in a simple dualism. At one pole, this dualism places something called the "traditional" student and the elite college. This student is assumed to have been a white male, born into a privileged family. He was likely prepared for college at Andover or Boys Latin and faced no real financial or academic obstacles before moving on to one of the Ivy League Schools, Michigan, or Berkeley. His needs were met by the typical residential college, where he concerned himself more with the doings of his fraternity and the football team than with his assignments in history or biology (Hall, 1991). But then, he had no real need to earn more than the "gentlemanly" C, for his fortunate birth assured him of one day taking his rightful place as a captain of industry, or possibly becoming a doctor or a lawyer. This traditional student benefited from a system of aristocratic academies, exclusive preparatory schools, and selective colleges organized to preserve the existing social hierarchy by passing the status of privileged parents onto their children, and their children only.

At the opposite pole, we also assume, was the typical junior college freshman. He, or she, differed from students at Yale, Williams, and Michigan in all material respects. The junior college student was not only unable to afford the cost of a traditional college, he had been ill-prepared by an overtaxed public high school for the intellectual rigors of an exclusive college or university (Witt, 1994). For this student, the public junior colleges was at once a haven and an pathway to opportunity. It was a low-cost, proximate, and culturally sensitive alternative to the aristocratic schooling that catered to the children of privilege. The recent immigrant, the isolated rural youth, the impoverished and the academically marginal — all of America's underserved — found in the junior college "the means to redress the grievances brought about by the practices of elitist or meritocratic educational systems" (Gillet-Karem, Roueche, & Roueche, 1991, p. 6). The junior college was an avenue to the university and the chance at a more fulfilling life.

While a fixture of the community college literature, does this dualism and its characterization of the public junior college student find support in the historical record? Fortunately, in forming an answer to this question, we have the benefit of a substantial body of contemporary research that examined what was known in the first decades of this century as the "economic selectivity" of high schools and colleges. We may also turn to various local sources — school records, newspaper accounts and college histories — for additional insight into both the class origins and social values of early junior college students.

At first glance, it would seem a reasonable presumption that early public junior colleges were democratic in their social composition and, by extension, in their campus culture. After all, as Monroe observed, the "major historical root" of the junior college is to be found in the egalitarian public high school, and the junior college would seemingly continue the high schools' commitment to a free, comprehensive, and accessible education (Monroe, 1972, p. 1, p. 10). But several studies completed between 1920 and 1935 indicate that the public high school, much less its closely associated junior college, was especially democratic in its social composition

(Frye, 1992). Many of these studies took their inspiration from George S. Counts' (1922) analysis of the social status of public high school students. As Counts found, and subsequent studies corroborated, the rapid growth in total high school enrollment after 1900 masked the fact that a disproportionately large percentage of this enrollment came from the families of the socially elite. At a time when only 20% of American families were headed by a proprietor, professional, or manager, slightly more than 45% of high school students came from these elite families. At the same time, while more than 75% of American families were headed by someone employed either as a farm worker or manual laborer, less than 32% of high school students came from these less affluent and prestigious families.

Two years later, Leonard Koos (1924) expanded Counts' study to include a representative sample of students enrolled in public and private junior colleges, state universities, and Harvard College. Koos' findings, reproduced below in Table 1, reflect Counts' original findings and demonstrate that the public junior colleges of this time were not only significantly more exclusive socially than public high schools, but that they were very nearly as selective as state universities and colleges. Only at Harvard did a greater percentage of freshmen tend to come from higher status families, a result that even Koos admitted might reflect nothing more than regional differences in workforce composition.

Admittedly, it does not follow necessarily that the elite social origins of the junior college students from this time would translate into a campus culture dominated by a climate of social exclusivity. After all, there is always the possibility that these young people elected to attend a junior college because they identified with its progressive spirit and egalitarian values, despite the privileged status of their parents. But the evidence, drawn from student annuals, various campus publications and local newspaper accounts, indicates that there was nothing at all egalitarian about the climate and culture of the typical junior college. Rather, what we encounter is an institution organized around a traditional curriculum, offering much the same extracurriculum as the standard college, less the dormitory and secret societies, and whose students took great pride in their membership in this a small and select community. Those students who entered public junior colleges of the 1920s and 1930s were not Jacksonian Democrats. They saw themselves as set apart from, and above, the drab, pedestrian existence of their out-of-school peers.

Table 1
Percentage Distribution by Occupational Groups: Fathers of Selected High School and College Students 1921-1922

	High School	Junior College (All Students)	Junior College Sophomores	College & University	Harvard University
Proprietors	19.8%	19.1%	17.8%	25.1%	35.7%
Professionals	9.4	14.0	15.3	20.8	30.3
Managers	16.3	16.3	17.8	7.8	5.4
Commercial	9.5	9.3	9.6	8.7	8.6
Clerical	5.8	3.8	2.8	3.5	2.4
Agricultural	2.4	14.2	11.7	22.5	1.4
Artisans	4.2	2.8	3.2	2.6	0.3
Laborers	29.1	15.6	18.3	7.1	6.5
Unknown	3.3	4.9	3.6	2.0	9.4

The early junior college's culture of exclusivity developed in two distinct phases, with the transition from the first to the second paralleling closely the pronounced growth in the number and average size of public junior colleges after 1920. Before 1920, few junior colleges outside of Chicago and Detroit enrolled more than 50 students, nor was their public support certain, as suggested by the frequency with which school districts chose to close them (Koos, 1924; Proctor, 1927). The students who did attend these small and often quite marginal institutions appreciated their situation, describing themselves as a close-knit and insular band of academic pioneers, united by a deep commitment to rigorous study. In their annuals and campus newspapers, this first generation of junior college students frequently announced their scholarly diligence, their sense of isolation, and even their outright disdain for the festivity then widely associated with residential college life. "There is no student organization," students at Placer Junior College asserted in 1916, "for the purpose of giving dances, feeds, and entertainments, which all goes to show we are here for work" (Placer Junior College, 1916, p. 58). Santa Rosa Junior College's Floyd Bailey, one of the college's first faculty members, noted much the same intense academic focus of those who came to his college before 1925. But he found nothing surprising in this sense of narrow purposefulness. His students, after all, were "not only ambitious and enthusiastic but [the] scholastic leaders of their high school classes" (Bailey, 1958, p. 12).

A cynic might suggest that such statements were calculated and self-serving, intended only to secure public support for what was a largely unknown and suspect schooling innovation. But it is more likely that such comments were the honest reflection of student and faculty attitudes at this time. In 1915, Placer Junior College's first principal, J. F. Engle, assured the community that the purpose of its junior college was not simply to replicate the schooling opportunities then available at the state university, but to exceed the university in the rigor of its academic standards and practices (*Auburn Herald*, 1915). Not only did Placer's courses meet ten months out of the year (Berkeley's met for only nine), but Engle also added a mandatory logic course for his sophomore students, closely modeled on Charles Reiber's rigorous course at Berkeley. And Placer's students, we are assured, heartily endorsed these curricular innovations (Placer Junior College, 1916).

By the mid-1920s, however, growing enrollments and a more secure place in the community made the junior college increasingly attractive to a new generation of students whose interests were not so narrowly academic as those of their predecessors. This second generation, benefiting in part from the greater autonomy and stability that junior colleges had won from their sponsoring high schools through regional accreditation and from generally larger class sizes, seized the opportunity to create a student culture that more closely imitated the student life of residential colleges and universities. No less elite in its social origins, and having chosen an institution whose future was no longer in question, this new generation of students were freed to institute an extracurriculum that featured the very "dances, feeds and entertainments" that the junior college's pioneering students had shunned in deference to community opinion.

This new junior college student culture, built around athletics, literary clubs, drama societies and an active social life, was no less self-absorbed and self-indulgent than the student cultures found at Ann Arbor, Berkeley, or Madison. Team sports proved particularly popular on junior college campuses, despite the practical problems posed by the often great distances between rival junior colleges. Equally favored were student newspapers, drama societies, and even orchestras. And beyond these institutionally-sponsored clubs and associations, junior college students regularly organized elaborate social gatherings — our notion of a "party" does them no justice — chaperoned by college faculty. While there is no evidence that any students were excluded from these activities for reasons of social inferiority, when one considers not only the choice of activities, but also the often considerable expense and leisure time attendant to participation, it seems likely that any student from a poor or working class family was effectively precluded.

We may learn something of the exclusivity of this student culture from the example of Kansas' Fort Scott Junior College. Established in 1919, the college was frequently highlighted in Fort Scott's

leading newspaper, the *Tribune*, and the activities of its students were regularly featured on the newspaper's society page. As we might expect, athletics came early to the college, with the first contests organized by students in 1922. But students were not initially interested in football or basketball, but in the far more prestigious sport of tennis (Sports news, 1922). Plays were also a regular feature of student life at Fort Scott from the first year, and the selection of productions (such as the well-received "Abu Sam of Old Japan") reflected both fascination with the distant cosmopolitan world and the unconscious racial stereotyping that so often characterized the culturally isolated and insensitive elites of early 20th century, small town America.

But it was in their elaborate seasonal socials that Fort Scott's students most clearly revealed the socially exclusive character of their extracurriculum. In 1922, the *Tribune* reported that both freshmen and sophomores had gathered at a student's country home for a Halloween gala (Junior college frolic, 1922). The affluence of these students is apparent in the details: "The house itself was large, being able to accommodate more than 70 students; it had been elaborately made over in the manner of a haunted house. The guests arrived by car." In these details we also find evidence of the students' affluent tastes and that concern for propriety common to the upper middle classes during this era. The evening's most popular game was "Fox Hunt," and after bobbing for apples, the students concluded their festivities with group singing and refreshments of salted nuts and pumpkin pies. There is no hint of dancing or any other questionable behavior, and the entire evening was chaperoned by a faculty member and his wife.

Did the Early Junior Colleges Encourage "New" Student Enrollment?

Despite this evidence of the elite status of junior college students, some might still argue that the exclusivity of these colleges was unintended, an inadvertent consequence of the deeply rooted social and economic inequalities of the era. After all, it may be argued, these colleges could not compel the attendance of historically bypassed youth. The elite status of junior college students, then, was not the result of institutional policy, but of larger social forces over which the junior college had no effective control.

This line of argument may be easily tested. If, as James Ratcliff has recently argued, "[f]rom as far back as 1914, the community college commitment to open admissions and access to higher education has been of paramount importance," we should expect that the school boards that governed these institutions adopted specific policies that would have lessened the barriers to access by "new" students (Ratcliff, 1994, p. 13). Among their options, these boards might have eliminated the traditional academic barriers to college admission, reduced the costs of attendance, or even instituted appropriate compensatory programs and services.

With respect to entrance standards, public junior colleges overwhelmingly conformed to contemporary practice, choosing to adopt essentially the same, strict entrance requirements imposed by the nation's most elite colleges. According to the *College Blue Book*, first published in 1923 as a "scientific" compilation of data on American colleges and universities, the entrance requirements of America's most exclusive private colleges and public junior colleges were virtually identical (Hurt, 1923). In its 1928 edition, for example, the *College Blue Book* reported that an applicant to Yale was expected to present a high school diploma and 15 units (or "points") of high school work distributed among the standard academic disciplines — English, history, the physical and biological sciences, and mathematics (Hurt, 1928). The applicant to Texarkana Junior College had to meet essentially the same requirements as did the applicant to Iowa's Burlington Junior College. But to enter Taft Junior College in California, a student had to offer 16 units of high school work, while to be admitted to Independence Junior College in Kansas, 17 academic units were required.

Of course, these junior colleges were not completely free in setting their entrance requirements. As a condition of both university recognition of their credits and regional accreditation, public junior colleges were only allowed to admit to full standing those students who met uni-

versity entrance standards. And compliance with these standards was closely monitored by annual university or association-sponsored inspections, as may be seen from the 1928 report prepared by a team from the University of Illinois' Committee on Higher Education Institutions following its visit to Iowa's Burlington Junior College (Junior College Committee on Admissions from Higher Institutions, 1929). In their report, the Illinois team noted that they examined the credentials of all 97 students then enrolled at Burlington; 92, it seems, had satisfied the university's entrance requirement of 14 high school units, but 3 students had completed only 13 units, while two had completed just 12. No sanctions were imposed by the university on Burlington for the five students enrolled with inadequate high school preparation, but the Illinois inspectors did remind Burlington that those applicants who were ineligible for regular admission to the university should not be admitted to the junior college, and that those applicants who failed to meet the university's standard were either to be privately tutored or to complete the appropriate high school work before entering upon a junior college course of study.

As Whitney (1928) found, the scrutiny to which the qualifications of Burlington's students were subjected by the University of Illinois was commonplace, and Burlington's latitude to circumvent these standards was limited. The junior college that chose to admit as students those who did not meet conventional academic criteria placed its accreditation at risk, as Chicago's Crane Junior College learned in 1930. Late that year, Crane's accreditation was revoked following a campus inspection by the North Central Association. North Central's accreditors found, among other deficiencies, that the college had been offering remedial courses in English to students whose high school records did not qualify them for admission to the University of Illinois (*Junior College Journal*, 1931, p. 205). The college, faced with possible closure, took immediate steps to conform its admissions policies to those of the University of Illinois. Not only did Crane discontinue all of its precollege courses (with the exception of English A, which was also offered by the University of Illinois), it also eliminated "laxity" in its admissions testing and credential review (Crane College Reinstated, p. 566). Crane's capitulation to North Central's demands was rapid and complete, and the school's accreditation was reinstated in June, 1931.

But with the exception of Crane, public junior colleges did not adopt university-style admissions requirements to placate some superior authority. Repeatedly, junior colleges freely adopted entrance requirements that were *more* stringent than those set by their accreditors. As late as 1917, for example, Joliet Junior College not only required the standard 15 high school units for admission, but demanded as well that applicants come from the top third of their high school class (Brooks, 1917). And, in California, Ontario's Chaffey College not only stipulated that applicants to its class of 1923 present 15 units, but that they also demonstrate "evidence of high moral character and earnestness of purpose" (Chaffey College, 1923, p. 7).

The access of nontraditional students to the early public junior college was further limited by the barrier of tuition. With the exception of California's junior colleges, most early junior colleges routinely charged a substantial tuition. In some states, such as Oklahoma and Texas, tuition was a matter of local option, while in others, notably Iowa, it was required by state law. As reflected in a sample of charges reported in the 1928 edition of *The College Blue Book* (see Table II), local junior colleges frequently charged a higher tuition than levied by their corresponding state university, greatly reducing any savings that a student might realize from attendance at a junior college. Indeed, in the case of Texas, the tuition charged by several junior colleges very nearly equaled the tuition, room and board costs of attendance at the University of Texas.

Of course, in the inflated economy of the 1990s, an annual tuition of $90 seems nominal. But even in the context of the relatively prosperous 1920s, a tuition of $90 or $100 — far less than actually charged by several junior colleges — likely represented a significant barrier to student access. Scholarships were few, and a typical monthly income for a skilled worker was just $125, while the nation's large number of agricultural and industrial workers earned substantially less (*Historical Statistics of the United States*). The junior college's national advocates were well aware that

tuition was the rule and not the exception, and that it had a detrimental impact upon access. Eells (1931), for example, found (and complained) that public junior colleges in only four states were entirely free of tuition for local residents: California, Arizona, Kansas, and North Carolina. But local school officials realized that a tuition-free junior college would almost certainly be opposed by local taxpayers, because most of their children would not even be eligible to attend. And it was to avoid such controversy that local school boards and school officials proved quite willing to compromise the principle of the "free public school." The principle of compromise was established early, in 1904, when Victor Hedgepeth, the superintendent of the short-lived Goshen Junior College, vigorously defended his college's $30 annual tuition on the grounds that the charge would "mature" students, even though he was also fully aware that Indiana state law did not allow for the levy (Hedgepeth, 1905, p. 20).

Why, Then, Did Students Attend?

Inherent to conventional notions of the egalitarian junior college is the assumption that its students enrolled out of necessity, being either too ill-prepared or too poor, or both, to go elsewhere. Yet this assumption seems untenable in the face of what we know of the academic preparation and social standing of the typical junior college student in the years before 1930. As a group, these students were every bit the intellectual and social equal of those who attended all but the most selective of the residential colleges and universities. Nothing, it seems, precluded the young person who elected to enroll at Fort Scott or Burlington Junior College from attending a state university or private college. Why, then, did an increasing number of parents enroll their children in what were, at the time, new and untested institutions? And just as importantly, why did an increasing number of young people comply with their parents' wishes?

Table 2
Tuition and Housing Charges Selected State Universities and Junior Colleges, 1928

	Tuition & Fees*	Room & Board
Arizona		
University of Arizona	$30	$295
Phoenix Junior College	$60	
Iowa		
University of Iowa	$90	$328
Burlington Junior College	$100	
Mason City Junior College	$60	$280
Sheldon Junior College	$105	
Waulkon Junior College	$95	
Texas		
University of Texas	$30	$207
Brownsville Junior College	$152	
Hillsboro Junior College	$105	
Paris Junior College	$110	
South Park Junior College	$145	$225
Temple Junior College	$200	
Tyler Junior College	$158	$315

*Resident Tuition

The parents of junior college students, it seems, were motivated by two, essentially personal considerations. First, in the years after the First World War, upper middle class parents came to realize that the increasing professionalization of American life threatened the privileged social status of their children. With the industrialization and commercialization of the American economy after 1900, the nation increasingly surrendered the control of its schooling, its government, its commerce, and its professions to "experts" — the holders of degrees, credentials and similar testimonials of competence (Levine, 1986). As one newspaper editor reminded his readers in 1912, the "necessity of securing a thorough education is becoming more and more apparent, if anyone hopes to successfully cope with conditions in this world" (Post graduate course, 1912, p. 1). The changing nature of American life was clearly seen by contemporaries as directly threatening the social status of those middle class Americans who failed to acquire an advanced education.

But for many of these parents, and especially those residing in small, isolated cities, inherent in their need to arrange for the advanced education of their children was a grave moral dilemma. To send their children away to college, these parents felt, was to place their moral character at risk. A great many parents simply did not trust residential colleges and universities to protect their immature children from the dangers of campus immorality and dissipation. University presidents of the period were well aware of such doubts, and Harper (1900), for one, made a particular point of reassuring parents that his university would tolerate no threat to the moral and spiritual well-being of its young undergraduates. As Harper acknowledged in *The Prospects of the Small College*, "a great outcry" had been made against state universities for their "anti-Christian" environment and the "evil and powerful" influences visited upon their youthful students. But he reassured parents that Chicago's students were no strangers to prayer, and that their regular participation in religious observances was encouraged by the university (p. 28).

Proponents of the junior college were equally aware of this parental distrust and made reference to it in their arguments on behalf of the junior college. A. A. Gray was the first among a long line of junior college proponents to appeal to these fears when he asked, rhetorically, "Why send our boys and girls away from home to be taught what they could secure at home just as well as in a college or university amid much that is undesirable? (Gray, 1915, p. 92; Fresno Public Schools, 1916, p. 39; Charters, 1929, p. 605).

And the public junior colleges themselves, in their regulation of student life, demonstrated a marked deference to the conservative sensibilities of parents. Well into the 1930s, it was not uncommon for junior colleges to assure parents that every propriety would be observed in the scheduling of classes and in the conduct of extracurricular programs. In one of the first public announcements by Temple Junior College's president, parents were not only advised that the college would offer no classes after 7:00 p.m., but added assurances that women students would be placed in the earliest available course sections, so that they would not be required to attend at a "late hour" (Farrell, 1964, p. 23). In much the same spirit, Texarkana Junior College sought to forestall the development of student fraternities and sororities — notorious havens of dissipation — by requiring all applicants to pledge that they not participate in these morally suspect organizations (Texarkana School Board, 1927).

It was in the public junior college, then, that conservative, elite parents found a workable solution to their dilemma. A locally-governed junior college provided their children with an education comparable in all essential respects to one offered by a standard college and university, thereby ensuring their children's access to high status occupations. But even more importantly for these parents, the junior college was also a safe and reassuring alternative to the large and impersonal lecture halls, the unsupervised dormitories and the unregulated social life of residential schools.

But what of the students themselves? Did they also see the junior college as a reasonable alternative to the university? From the evidence it appears that such was, in fact, the case. One finds no indication in the record that those students

who enrolled in an early public junior college viewed their choice as a compromise, a decision that somehow forced them to limit their aspirations in deference to the desires of their parents. To the contrary, they saw the junior college as their gateway to personally rich and rewarding careers. One finds just this sentiment in the welcoming remarks offered by Fort Scott's sophomores to entering freshmen at the college's 1925 convocation: "Heartiest greetings and welcome to the J. C. family of the aspirants to higher learning, culture and [the] development of profitable careers as well as for good citizenship and worthy lives" (Scribbler ju-co party, 1923).

Nor were the hopes of these students misplaced. At least before 1940, the junior college served the career aspirations of its students quite effectively. For those students who wished the baccalaureate, the strict system of institutional accreditation then in place combined with the narrow scope of the junior college curriculum minimized transfer difficulties. Even more so, those students who wished to pursue professional degrees in law or medicine found the junior college an ideal stepping stone. Throughout this period, neither law nor medical schools required the baccalaureate for admission, nor was demand for admission sufficient to necessitate great selectivity on the part of these schools. The junior college student with the appropriate 10 or 15 credit hours could gain admission to most professional schools without any real difficulty. And lastly, for those students who wished to take up elementary school teaching, a great many junior colleges outside of California offered programs that culminated in the award of a teaching credential. Particularly in Missouri, elementary education programs were often the most popular choice of students, and they largely explain the relatively high representation of women among all junior college students (Carpenter & Sala, 1940).

But just as importantly, as we saw in the case of Fort Scott, the junior college also allowed students to replicate much of the campus culture found at the university. For those young people who shared the conservative values of their elite parents, the closed and closely monitored nature of the junior college's extracurriculum may well have been preferable, for it allowed a large degree of personal growth and exploration without the risks that come with unregulated personal freedom. And, at the same time, the exclusive nature of this extracurriculum also served to reinforce the elite status of junior college students within their home communities. To lead a team to victory, to edit the school paper, or to star in a college play guaranteed the junior college student in Fort Scott or Texarkana extensive and laudatory coverage in the local newspaper. For the student of this era, the choice of attending a junior college was clearly no compromise, but an option which afforded benefits that were both real and attractive.

Conclusions

As conventionally portrayed, the early public junior college was "the people's college," inspired and informed by a fundamentally egalitarian ideology. It was the passageway through which new students first gained access to those life and career opportunities previously reserved for the children of privilege. And since the time of Fields (1964), it has also been assumed that the egalitarian junior college provided the ideological foundation upon which would arise the modern and socially progressive community college.

What the evidence shows, however, is that the early public junior college was elitist in its purposes, policies and culture. Students did not come to the junior college out of necessity nor in the hope of improving their social status. As a group, the junior college students of this era were blessed with the academic preparation and familial wealth and position that placed attendance at virtually any college or university within their reach. The public junior college was able to attract an increasing number of these students because it afforded their parents a safe alternative to the morally suspect university, while providing them with an education that not only fulfilled their career aspirations, but that allowed them to closely approximate the array of extracurricular activates and diversions available to their peers at the nation's most traditional and elite college campuses. In retrospect, the egalitarian rhetoric of the junior college's early national proponents seems more a hopeful vision than an accurate description of this era's junior colleges.

These findings also prompt three observations. First, community college historians must reexamine the assumption that early junior colleges and the modern community college are the alpha and omega of some progressive evolutionary process, and that they are united over the decades by a shared commitment to egalitarian principles. In fact, the former were small and exclusive institutions, marked by a campus culture shaped primarily by the conservative interests of elite parents and the equally elite career aspirations of their children. The latter are large and impersonal institutions, offering credits more than programs or degrees, and, with a student body consumed by jobs and families, largely devoid of a traditional extracurriculum.

Second, the early public junior college did offer its students a distinctive culture, and at least on the surface this culture appears to have been successful in supporting program completion and degree attainment. But we should not romanticize this student culture, recognizing that it largely reinforced the social status of its elite participants as it worked to isolate them from the pedestrian life of the larger community. Given its purposes, this culture seems ill-suited to the goal of promoting the academic achievement of America's underserved youth. Those who wish to encourage such achievement in our present age should seek their models of exemplary practice elsewhere.

Finally, in seeking some justification for the values of accessibility, comprehensiveness, and diversity, modern-day advocates of the community college should no longer look to the early two-year college. Rather than relying upon a flawed history, these advocates might more profitably reexamine the writings of Walter Garms (1977) or Dorothy Knoell (1966), who grounded their justifications for policies of broad access and opportunity in an insightful analysis of the public good. The junior college was exclusive in its purposes and served the narrow interests and needs of parochial elites in much the same fashion as universities of the early 20th century served the interests and needs of the nation's cosmopolitan elites.

References

Auburn Herald. (1915, August 23). Dr. J. F. Engle makes address. Auburn, CA: Author.

Bailey, F. P. (1958). *Santa Rosa Junior College, 1918-1957: A personal history.* Unpublished manuscript, Santa Rosa, CA: Santa Rosa City Library County Archives.

Brooks, E. (1917). *The junior college.* Unpublished master's thesis, Clark University, Worcester, MA.

Carpenter, W. W., & Sala, J. R. (1940). *Junior colleges of Missouri.* Unpublished manuscript, New York: Teachers College Archives, Columbia University.

Chaffey College. (1923). *Announcement of courses: 1923-24.* Ontario, CA: Author.

Charters, W. W. (1929). Functions of the junior college. *Proceedings of the National Education Association, 25,* 300-307.

Counts, G. S. (1922). *The selective character of American secondary education.* Chicago: University of Chicago.

Crane College reinstated. (1931). *Junior College Journal, 1* (9), 5-6.

Eells, W. C. (1931). The junior college at the Detroit convention, *Junior College Journal, 1*(7), 438.

Farrell, H. C., Jr. (1964). *Temple Junior College and its founding, growth, and development, 1926-1964.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Colorado State College, Denver.

Fields, R. R. (1964). *The community college movement.* New York: McGraw-Hill.

Fresno Public Schools. (1916). *Annual Report.* Fresno, CA: Fresno Republican.

Frye, J. H. (1992). *The vision of the public junior college: 1900-1940.* New York: Greenwood.

Garms, W. I. (1977). *Financing community colleges.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Gillett-Karem, R., Roueche, J., & Roueche, S., (1991). *Under-representation and the question of diversity: Women and minorities in the community college.* Washington, DC: Community College Press.

Gray, A. A. (1915). *The junior college.* Unpublished master's thesis, University of California.

Hall, J. W. (1991). *Access through innovation: New colleges for new students.* New York: ACE/ Macmillan.

Harper, W. R. (1900). *The prospects of the small college.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Hedgepeth, V. (1905). The six year high school plan at Goshen, Indiana. *School Review, 13,* 19-23.

Historical statistics of the United States. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Washington: Government Printing Office.

Hurt, H. W. (1923). *The college blue book,* Vol. 1. Chicago: The College Blue Book.

Hurt, H. W. (1928). *The college blue book.* (2nd ed.). Chicago: The College Blue Book.

Junior College Committee on Admissions from Higher Institutions. (1929). *Report on Burlington Junior College.* Urbana: University of Illinois.

Junior college frolic. (1922, October 22). *Fort Scott Tribune.*

Junior College Journal. (1931). *1*(4), 205.

Karabel, J. (1972). Community colleges and social stratification. *Harvard Educational Review, 42,* 521-562.

Koos, L. (1924). *The junior college,* Education Series No. 5. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota.

Knoell, D. M. (1966). *Toward educational opportunity for all.* Albany: The State University of New York.

Levine, D. O. (1986). *The American college and the culture of aspiration: 1915 - 1940.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Monroe, C. R. (1972). *Profile of the community college.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Placer Junior College. (1916). *Potpourri.* Auburn, CA: Author.

Post graduate course. (1912, December 14). *Le Grand Advocate.* Le Grand, CA.

Proctor, W. M. (1927). *The junior college.* Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.

Ratcliff, J. L. (1994). Seven streams in the historical development of the modern community college. In G. Baker, *A handbook on the community college in America.* New York: Greenwood Press.

Scribbler ju-co party. (1923, May 25). *Fort Scott tribune.* Fort Scott, KS.

Sports news. (1922, October 16). *Fort Scott Tribune.* Fort Scott, KS.

Texarkana School Board. (1927). *Minutes of 1926-27.*

Whitney, F. L. (1928). *The junior college in America.* Greeley: Colorado State Teachers College.

Witt, A. A., Wattenberger, J. L., Gollattscheck, J., & Suppiger, J. (1994). *America's community colleges: The first century.* Washington: Community College Press.

Chapter 11

Persistence and the First-Year Experience at the Community College: Teaching New Students to Survive, Stay, and Thrive

Vincent Tinto

We have witnessed, over the last fifteen years, an explosion of interest in issues of student persistence in higher education. Researchers and policy makers alike have turned their attention to the dual tasks of pinpointing the causes of student attrition and identifying the types of institutional initiatives that enhance persistence. Though early research focused primarily on four-year institutions, it has increasingly turned to community colleges and the experiences of the many students who attend those institutions. That this is the case reflects not only the imbalance of past research but also the belated recognition of the importance of community colleges to the growth of higher education generally. Enrollments in community colleges now constitute over half of all new enrollments in higher education, and an increasing proportion of four-year college enrollments have their origins in community college enrollments (U.S. Department of Education, 1993). Indeed, in many four-year colleges, more than half of BA recipients in any one year are transfers from two-year colleges.

As attention has shifted to the experience of community college students and the task of enhancing their persistence, so too has it turned to the importance of the freshman year experience. In a manner that parallels the development of freshman year programs in the four-year sector, we are now witnessing a similar pattern of research and development of freshman year programs in two-year colleges. But here an important difference emerges. As contrasted to the many freshman year programs in the four-year sector which draw upon the efforts of student affairs staff and involve activities outside and supplemental to the classroom, freshman year programs in community colleges will, of necessity, be more clearly focused on the classroom and involve faculty as often as they do the staff of student affairs. Beyond the obvious fact that many community colleges may not have sufficient student affairs staff to run freshman year programs, most students attending those colleges are unlikely to spend additional time on campus outside their classrooms. If they are not reached via the classroom, it is unlikely that they will be reached at all.

This chapter describes the theoretical and research findings on persistence among community college students that underlie these developments. Specifically, this chapter details the evidence we have accumulated that pinpoints not

only the importance of the freshman year to persistence in community colleges, but also what we have learned as to the specific circumstances leading to attrition among community college students. In doing so, this chapter also identifies the issues that freshman year programs must address to enhance persistence among community college students and highlights the special importance of the classroom to persistence in the first year.

Before proceeding, however, it is necessary to point out that any discussion of community colleges and community college students pertaining to persistence will necessarily contain a number of generalizations that tend to oversimplify the very complex picture of institutional and student behavior. Community colleges range from the urban to the rural, and serve students whose participation varies from irregular non-matriculated part-time attendance to quite regular full-time attendance geared to specific degree or certificate outcomes. The specific roots of persistence will invariably reflect the unique situation faced by a particular college and the students it serves. Though generalizations are sometimes necessary, they are but a beginning point for further institutional inquiry as to how they apply to their own setting. Nevertheless, because our judgments are based on an increasing wealth of research and policy reports on the experience of community college students, they can serve as a useful guide to the sorts of issues that all colleges will be likely to address on their own campuses. It is in this spirit that they are offered.

The Sources of Attrition Among Community College Students

The sources of attrition among community college students are many (see Tinto, 1987, 1993). "Student leaving" from a community college takes a variety of forms and arises from a diversity of sources, individual and institutional. Some are amenable to institutional action, others are less so. The variation in causes of leaving is, in a very real sense, as varied as the institutional settings from which it arises. Nevertheless, in the midst of this complexity we can identify a number of major sources of student attrition from community colleges.

Academic Difficulty

One of the most common sources of attrition is described by the term academic difficulty. Simply put, some students leave because they are unable or unwilling to meet the minimum academic standards of the college. They frequently leave because they are forced to leave or soon expect to be.

That academic difficulty is a major source of attrition reflects the fact that large numbers of students who enter community colleges lack the basic academic skills required for college work (Roueche & Roueche, 1993). It is estimated that an average 40% of all entering community college students require remedial education assistance in at least one area of basic competence, that is to say reading, writing, and mathematics (U.S. Department of Education, 1993). Colleges have, in turn, responded with a variety of developmental education efforts from summer bridge programs, mandatory assessment and course placement at entry, to course-linked supplemental instruction (Blanc, Debuhr, & Martin, 1983). These have focused not only on enhancing students' academic knowledge and skills, but also improving their study habits and time management skills. Lest we forget, some students find themselves in academic difficulty because they have not acquired the study and time management skills needed to succeed.

But while the incidence of academic dismissal is high, and on some campuses now makes up a large proportion of all student leavers, most attrition arises *voluntarily* despite the maintenance of sufficient levels of grade performance. Most attrition results not from poor academic skills per se, but from a host of other events which mirror the character of individual goals and commitments, the availability of financial resources, and, most importantly, the nature of individual social and academic experiences in college after entry. Among this category of voluntary leaving, there appear to be seven distinct causes of departure. These may be described by the following terms: adjustment, goals, uncertainty, finances, commitments, congruence, and isolation.

Adjustment

Some attrition, primarily that which arises very early in the student's career, results from the person's inability to make the adjustment to the academic and social life of the college (Upcraft & Gardner, 1989). Even the most able or socially mature may experience problems in making the transition from high school or work to the demands of college. For most, these difficulties are transitory. For others, the transition may be quite difficult, severe enough to lead to early withdrawal from college, often in the first six weeks of the first semester.

Some individuals enter college insufficiently prepared for the scale of the academic and social change required of them. Others come from backgrounds and/or situations which differ markedly from those of most people on campus (e.g., disadvantaged students and first-generation college students). The scope of the adjustments they are required to make often overwhelms them. Still others do not possess the coping skills which enable them to deal with new situations easily (Billson & Brooks-Terry, 1987; Lowe, 1989). As distinguished from persons who successfully make the transition to college, they appear unable to make positive steps toward problem resolution. Without assistance, they leave not because they are unable to meet the demands of college, but because they have been unable to cope with the difficulties of making the transition to college. They leave without giving themselves a chance to succeed.

For this reason, among others, colleges have turned to expanded orientation programs and freshman seminars to provide new students with the assistance they need to make the transition to college (Upcraft & Gardner, 1989). They have done so recognizing the fact that one of the most pressing needs of new students, especially first-generation college students, is for accurate and reliable information about the character of the college and the availability of assistance.

Goals

But not all early departures are the result of the inability of persons to adjust to college. Some reflect the character of individual goals and the extent of individual commitments to the goal of college completion. Not all persons enter college with clearly held goals or with goals which are either coterminous with degree or certificate completion or compatible with the educational goals of the college into which first entry is made.

Some individuals enter colleges with goals which are either more limited than or more extensive than those of the college. Among the former, many persons enter colleges for quite limited purposes and intend to leave prior to degree completion. Rather than representing some failure of purpose, their departure reflects their having successfully completed their plans for study. Among the latter, students often enter community colleges with the unstated intention of leaving prior to degree completion in order to transfer to another college. Entry to one college is seen as necessary temporary step toward eventual goal completion.

Whatever the character of initial intentions, some students will alter their goals during the course of their college careers. For some this change reflects the natural process of maturation that occurs among maturing youth. For others it also mirrors the impact the college experience has on individual judgments and preferences. In either instance, change in individual goals may lead students to leave even when their college experience has been quite satisfactory.

Uncertainty

All this assumes, of course, that students begin college with clearly defined goals. In fact this is not the case. Many, possibly even a majority of students begin their college careers with only the vaguest notions of why they have done so. That they have yet to clearly formulate their educational and career goals is in itself not a problem. Some degree of uncertainty is typical of most student careers. Difficulties arise, however, when individual goals go unresolved over long periods of time. This is the case because lack of goal clarity serves to undermine the willingness of students to meet the demands of college life and increases the likelihood that individuals will, when stressed, leave rather than persist.

We need to be reminded of the fact that most students, young and older, either enter college uncertain about their careers or change their minds, at least once, during the college years. It would be surprising were it otherwise. Here the need for effective advising is clear. All college students, but certainly those who are uncertain about their majors and careers, need consistent and reliable advising (Creamer, 1980). But the sort of advising required of students who are uncertain is not the sort of advising most faculty are qualified to provide, namely developmental advising (Frost, 1991; Habley, 1981). That task is most commonly the domain of professionally trained advisors and counselors.

Finances

Not surprisingly, finances also play an important role in decisions to leave college. Many students, especially those from working-class and disadvantaged backgrounds and those who have family obligations, leave because they are unable to bear the full cost, direct and indirect, of going to college (Cabrera, Stampen, & Hansen, 1990; Nora, 1990). In addition, when attending, they are often forced to attend part-time and/or work while in college because the aid is either insufficient or structured to require large debt burden (i.e., loans versus grants). Though they receive financial assistance, the character of that aid may require them to take on additional responsibilities which detract from the likelihood of continued persistence. But colleges have sometimes overestimated the importance of finances to college persistence because of the way in which institutional researchers have used exit interviews and student surveys. Though leaving students typically rank finances, together with the ubiquitous category of "personal reasons," as the most important reason for leaving, follow-up interviews typically reveal that students often use the category of finances to describe their evaluation of the benefits of their experience relative to the costs of that experience. A student's decision to leave reflects not so much cost per se as it does the value of what the student receives for that cost. Not surprisingly students' notions of value are intimately tied to the quality of their academic and social experiences in the college.

Commitments

Financial considerations aside, the completion of a college degree requires a considerable amount of effort and therefore commitment to the goal of college completion. This is especially true for those individuals who have to balance a multiplicity of demands on their time (e.g., family and work). Not all students possess that commitment. Their leaving, whether forced or voluntary, mirrors more their unwillingness to expend the effort required to attain the goal of college completion than it does lack of ability to do so.

But individual commitments to college may also be influenced by external commitments (e.g., family and work) which limit the person's ability to meet the demands of college (Fox, 1986). Rather than leave because of lack of commitment, many persons are "pulled away" from college. They leave because they feel obliged to leave to attend to other, more pressing, obligations. Because such obligations are frequently temporary in nature, so too is their withdrawal. It often leads not to permanent withdrawal but to temporary suspension of attendance or "stopout." Given the opportunity, such persons are more likely to return to college once external commitments are met.

As in the case of goals, individual commitments also change during the course of the student career. And like goals, those changes will necessarily mirror the character of individual experiences in college after entry. In this regard, *one of the clearest outcomes of research on student departure is the finding that individual experiences within college after entry are more important to persistence and departure than what has gone on before entry* (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Tinto, 1987, 1993). Though personality attributes and prior experience matter, they have less to do with departure than does the quality of individual academic and social experiences with faculty, staff, and other students. The impact of these experiences upon persistence may be described by two terms: congruence and isolation.

Congruence

Congruence is largely the outcome of the quality of interaction between the individual and other

members of the college. Congruence reflects the person's evaluation of the manner and degree to which the social and intellectual life of the college serves his or her interests and needs. Departure in this case frequently leads students to transfer to other colleges deemed more suited to their needs and interests. Here the terms mismatch and/or irrelevancy are often used to describe the ways in which students perceive their lack of congruence with the prevailing academic and social communities of the college.

Another form of incongruence, one that should be of concern to all colleges, is that which arises when individuals find the intellectual demands of the college insufficiently stimulating. Some students leave, not because they are out of place or because the academic work is too difficult, but because they are bored. It is perhaps telling of the state of higher education that such individuals are frequently more able and more concerned about the quality of education than is the average persister on campus. Not surprisingly, such leavers most frequently understand their actions, not as a form of failure, but as a positive step towards goal fulfillment. They see the college as failing them rather than the reverse.

Isolation

Unlike lack of congruence, isolation is largely the outcome of the absence of interaction between the person and other members of the college. Departure arises, not from a mismatch, but from the absence of significant social and intellectual contact. Most typically, leavers of this type express a sense of not having made significant contact or having established membership in the life of the college. Rather than feeling at odds with the communities of the college, they express a sense of separation from or marginality to the life of those communities.

Though both forms of isolation, social and intellectual, influence decisions to leave, isolation from the academic life of the college, in particular from the faculty who shape that life, proves to be an especially important source of both attrition (Pascarella, Smart, & Ethington, 1986; Williamson & Creamer, 1988) and low levels of student development (Astin, 1993; Tinto, 1993). This is the case because the absence of faculty contact undermines student involvement in the learning process and thereby diminishes student growth.

The Freshman Year and Persistence in Community Colleges

Given what we know about the sources of attrition, the practical question remains as to what institutions may do to address these varying sources of student attrition. Here research and theory converge. It is during the freshman year, the critical period of entry, that persistence is so tenuous and the institutional actions are most likely to yield greatest benefits in terms of both student learning and persistence (Upcraft & Gardner, 1989). And it is in the classrooms of the community college that institutional actions are most likely to reach most students. To understand why this is the case, we need to review briefly what we know not only about the incidence of attrition over the course of the college years but also about the character of the longitudinal process of student persistence as it occurs in community college settings.

The Incidence of Attrition during the First Year of College

For all institutions, the greatest bulk of student attrition takes place during the first and prior to the second year of college (Tinto, 1993). Among two-year colleges, nearly half of all beginning students leave college before the start of their second year. Given that roughly 34% of entering full-time two-year college students will, on the average, complete their associates degree, attrition during the first year alone accounts for nearly three-quarters of all attrition. Furthermore, some attrition after the first year, such as that arising from uncertainty, has its roots in the first-year experience. Of course, not all student attrition during this period is of the same type. While some students transfer to four-year institutions prior to the completion of their programs, others shift their pattern of participation from full-time to part-time attendance. And though some of these behaviors may not be planned, some are clearly the result of intentional actions that make up a planned course of action leading to a college degree. For these students, at least, it is difficult to link their experience of college

with their actions. Nevertheless, for the great bulk of early leavers, it is quite evident the first-year experience plays a critical role in decisions about educational continuation.

The Process of Persistence and The First-Year Experience

That this is the case reflects not only the character of the community college, but also the nature of persistence as it arises in the community college context. It is a prevailing view that persistence in college is analogous to the process of establishing competent membership in a community (Tinto, 1987, 1993). Like the latter process, persistence in college entails making personal contact with various members of the college community (students, faculty, and staff) and establishing competent membership, that is becoming integrated, in the communities of the college. But unlike communities generally, colleges are comprised of both academic and social communities, each with its own characteristic norms and patterns of behavior. While membership is possible in both types of communities, persistence in college requires at least a minimum level of competent membership in one, the academic — thus the importance of the acquisition of academic skills and the meeting of minimum standards of academic performance to the process of persistence in college.

Though the manner in which contact and membership shape persistence among community college students varies somewhat from institution to institution, personal contact with both faculty and student peers and the attainment of competent membership in the first year of college is essential to all forms of persistence, indeed to learning generally. This reflects several important events which take place during the first year of college. First it mirrors the manner in which early contact with both faculty and student peers sets the stage for subsequent interactions and eventually membership in the communities of the college. Beyond the critical issue of isolation, early contact enables newcomers to locate a small group of peers who may assist with the often difficult process of making the transition to college. Those affiliations, especially with one's peers, provide a type of assistance that no formal seminar can. Such assistance, for instance in getting to know the "lay of the land," may be particularly important for students of color in largely White institutions and/or for first-generation college students (Attinasi, 1989; Padilla & Pavel, 1986). In large institutions, early affiliations serve to break the remote world of the college down into smaller, more knowable parts. Just as importantly, early contacts with one's peers and the personal affiliations it inspires, may provide much needed social support that helps individuals cope with the many external demands on their time and energies (Tinto & Russo, in press).

In the academic realm of the college, similar situations arise when early contact with students, faculty, and staff helps the newcomer make the transition to college level work. By helping the student acquire needed academic skills, early patterns of involvement often spell the difference between success and difficulty. In effect, early academic contact helps the novice onto the path to academic success. The absence of early assistance may lead, over time, to the opposite outcome. Lest we forget, attrition is the final product of a sequence of events for which the accumulated effect is seen in the act of leaving. Its institutional roots are established at the very outset of the college experience. The simple fact is that the earlier one makes contact to assist students, the easier it is to address academic difficulties before they become academic "problems."

The dilemma most community college students face is finding time and place for such contact and involvement, academic and/or social. Their patterns of participation and their many obligations outside college limit easy contact outside the classroom. Though we know that such contact may be beneficial, it is not easy to come by. For this reason increasing numbers of colleges have turned to the classroom as the primary vehicle through which both social and academic involvement is gained (Erickson & Strommer, 1991). The use of early and frequent feedback techniques (Angelo & Cross, 1993), cooperative teaching strategies that require students to work in teams (Bonwell & Eison, 1991; Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 1991), and the development of learning communities which link students between courses (Matthews, 1986;

Gablenick, MacGregor, Matthews & Smith, 1990; Smith, 1993) are but three of the many strategies now being employed by community colleges to actively involve students in the social and academic life of the classroom. In their utilization, community colleges have found it possible to promote integration and competent membership in the college via involvement in the classroom (Tinto, Goodsell Love, & Russo, 1994; Tinto & Russo, in press).

Conclusion

Attrition in the community college is a continuing problem. Most colleges lose at least two-thirds of their beginning full-time students. But while it is true that attrition arises from many sources, some of which are not easily amenable to institutional action, it is the case that community colleges may do much to enhance persistence by focusing on the first-year experience, especially within the classroom. Therefore, community colleges must look not so much to the staff of students affairs, as they have in the past, but to the faculty whose work centers on the classroom experience. Colleges have to engage faculty in a conversation about the many ways in which teaching and curricular strategies may be employed to actively involve students in learning. Administrators, for their part, have to find ways to provide the resources and incentives needed to ensure that innovations arise and, over time, become institutionalized in the educational fabric of the college. In doing so, administrators and faculty alike, will discover that active student involvement and membership in the social and academic communities of the classroom serve as the sources of greater involvement and membership more broadly understood. The result will be both increased persistence and more importantly, enhanced student learning and development.

References

Angelo, T., & Cross, P. (1993). *Classroom assessment techniques: A handbook for college teachers*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Astin, A. (1993). *What matters in college? Four critical years revisited*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Attinasi, L. (1989). Getting in: Mexican Americans' perceptions of university attendance and the implications for freshman year persistence. *Journal of Higher Education, 60*, 247-277.

Billson, J. M., & Brooks-Terry, M. (1987). In search of the silken purse: Factors in the attrition among first-generation students. *College and University, 58*, 57-75.

Blanc, R. A., Debuhr, L. E., & Martin, L. E. (1983). Breaking the attrition cycle: The effects of supplemental instruction on undergraduate performance and attrition. *Journal of Higher Education, 54*, 80-90.

Bonwell, C., & Eison, J. (1991). *Active learning: Creating excitement in the classroom*. In ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Reports. Washington DC: The George Washington University, School of Education and Human Development.

Cabrera, A. F., Stampen, J. O., & Hansen, W. L. (1990). Exploring the effects of ability to pay on persistence in college. *The Review of Higher Education, 13*, 303-336.

Creamer, D. (1980). Educational advising for student retention. *Community College Review, 7*, 11-18.

Erickson, B. L., & Strommer, D. W. (1991). *Teaching college freshmen*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Fox, R. N. (1986). Application of a conceptual model of college withdrawal to disadvantaged students. *American Educational Research Journal, 23*, 415-424.

Frost, S. H. (1991). *Academic advising for student success: A system of shared responsibility*. (ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Reports, No. 3.). Washington, DC: The George Washington University, School of Education and Human Development.

Gablenick, F., MacGregor, J., Matthews, R., & Smith, B. (1990). *Learning communities: Creating connections among students, faculty, and disciplines*. (New Directions for Teaching and Learning, No. 41). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Habley, W. R. (1981). Academic advising: The critical link in student retention. *NASPA Journal, 18*, 45-50.

Johnson, D., Johnson, R., & Smith, K. (1991). *Cooperative learning: Increasing college faculty instructional productivity*. (ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report No. 4). Washington DC: The George Washington University, School of Education and Human Development.

Lowe, M. (1989). *Chicano students perceptions of their community college-going experience with implications for persistence: A naturalistic inquiry*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Arizona State University, Tempe.

Matthews, R. (1986). Learning communities in the community college. *AACJC Journal*. October/November, 44-47.

Nora, A. (1990). Campus-based aid programs as determinants of retention among Hispanic community college students. *Journal of Higher Education, 61*, 312-331.

Padilla, R., & Pavel, D. M. (1986). *Successful Hispanic community college students: An exploratory qualitative study*. Tempe: Hispanic Research Center, Arizona State University.

Pascarella, E., Smart, J., & Ethington, C. (1986). Long-term persistence of two-year college students. *Research in Higher Education, 24*, 47-71.

Pascarella, E., & Terenzini, P. (1991). *How college affects students*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Roueche, J. E., & Baker, G. A. (1987). *Access and excellence*. Washington DC: Community College Press.

Roueche, J. E., & Roueche, S. D. (1993). *Between a rock and hard place: The at-risk student in the open-door college*. Washington, DC: Community College Press.

Smith, B. L. (1993, Fall). Creating learning communities. *Liberal Education*.

Tinto, V. (1987). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Tinto, V. (1993). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition*. (2nd ed.). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Tinto, V., Goodsell Love, A., & Russo, P. (1994). *Building community among new college students*. University Park, PA: The National Center on Postsecondary Teaching, Learning and Assessment, The Pennsylvania State University.

Tinto, V., & Russo, P. (in press). Coordinated studies programs: The effect on student involvement at a community college. *Community College Review*.

Upcraft, M. L., & Gardner, J., (Eds.). (1989). *The freshman year experience*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics. (1993). *Digest of educational statistics*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Williamson, D., & Creamer, D. (1988). Student attrition in two- and four-year colleges: Application of a theoretical model. *Journal of College Student Development, 29*(3), 197-217.

Chapter 12

Teaching New Students at the Community College: A Unique Time in a Unique Setting

Dennis McGrath

If community colleges are to respond to the needs of new students, then faculty must make substantial changes in their approach to teaching and learning. Although community colleges pride themselves on being student-centered institutions, there is much more that faculty must do in the classroom to engage the new student.

Faculty at many universities, especially senior faculty, have largely abandoned their concern for new students by withdrawing from the teaching of introductory courses. In consequence, one of the major solutions to the problems of new students at those institutions is to reverse that trend, especially by putting the best teachers into freshman classrooms. This is not at all the situation at the community college. At the community college most faculty regularly teach introductory courses. Many teach four and five sections semester after semester. Because of this difference in teaching situation, university responses to the problems of new students are not easily transferable to the community college. Our institutions have very distinctive features; so too must our solutions. However, in order to develop the most appropriate and powerful interventions we must gain a better understanding of both the typical student experience of the community college classroom and the common problems and dilemmas faced by faculty. This is an unusually complex matter because the typical urban community college serves an unusually diverse student body, while the experience of teaching in the open-access classroom creates distinctive challenges for faculty. Therefore, to fully explore the teaching of new students in the community college requires that we pay attention to both sides of the desk, both students and teachers in their typical encounters with one another.

A Cultural Perspective On Nontraditional Students

Let us begin with the students. To explore the experience that nontraditional students have in their initial engagement with the community college classroom requires that the conventional analysis offered by educational psychology be displaced by a cultural approach which is more sensitive to questions of meaning and interpretation. The problems and failures that nontraditional students experience in college courses often are explained by educational researchers in terms of specific academic deficiencies or students' demographic characteristics. In fact, measured in terms of research on traditional students, community college students appear almost fated

to fail, because they exhibit most of the characteristics that predict lack of success (Astin, 1977, 1982; Pappas & Loring, 1985).

From a cultural perspective, though, this seriously misdescribes the student situation. Students don't simply act out "deficiencies" or "demographic characteristics." Instead, they, like all social actors, act into a situation which is already structured and meaningfully configured by others. A cultural analysis may be helpful in disclosing the unacknowledged background conditions of teaching and learning so that we may interpret student difficulties not as simple failures or lacks, but as meaningful responses to social situations. We need to become more sensitive to the types of challenges that educational environments present to nontraditional students, as well as becoming better able to identify the kinds of practices needed to render them more intelligible and supportive places for students.

David Riesman's work may be helpful in this regard. He has long suggested that colleges and universities may be usefully categorized by the extent students identify with the academic practices valued by the faculty. His sketch of the structure of higher education locates the elite private colleges and universities at the top, followed by flagship state universities, through the other types of schools which display increasing divergence between the values of faculty and students (Riesman, 1980). Following this line of thought, students may also be located on a continuum spanning those who enter higher education fully identifying with the values and central practices of the academic community to those who are profoundly confused by and disengaged from academic life.

Of course, college students have always varied in their degree of acceptance of faculty values and their willingness to subordinate themselves to the goals of the curriculum. For instance, college life of the nineteenth century valued irresponsibility and carefree abandon; it revolved around the extracurriculum of fraternities, athletics, and clubs. The "college man" rejected the formal academic curriculum in favor of the extracurriculum, believing professional success to depend less on mastering academics, and more on demonstrating leadership, developing personal style, and forging contacts (Horowitz, 1987). But despite this fact, until the massive expansion of higher education in the 1960s, students and faculty shared similar backgrounds and life worlds, and enacted familiar cultural roles. Even the most stereotypically "collegiate" students, striving only for "gentleman's Cs," understood the value system they were rejecting by engaging in the social rather than the intellectual life of the college. Put another way, the value systems of students and faculty were in at least rough articulation. This fact deeply shaped the teaching and learning situation of traditional institutions because it assured mutual understanding and a working agreement about the aims of the curriculum and the value of such academic practices as writing, interpretation, argumentation, and analysis. But the very success of the original mission of the community college, the democratization of education by providing access to disenfranchised groups, has shattered the once routine expectation that teachers and students share a common cultural world (McGrath & Spear, 1991).

The educational problems of nontraditional students are not the simple expression of their often limited high school achievement, or low income, or the heavy burden of work and family responsibilities. Instead, viewed from a cultural perspective, the problem is better located in the structural disarticulation between the assumptions, expectations, and practices of open-access colleges and those of their student populations (McGrath & Spear, 1991). Nontraditional students are typically confused and bewildered by the academic culture of higher education because they largely come from backgrounds which have not prepared them to identify with, or even to recognize, the central values and practices of academic life.

This structural disarticulation has been implicitly recognized in ethnographies of open-access institutions (London, 1978; Weis, 1985). For instance, in the late 1970s, London studied a newly founded urban community college serving predominantly white working-class students (London, 1978). He described the students as deeply ambivalent toward themselves and their

situation. In his account, the students had internalized an individualistic ideology which traces academic success to character traits such as hard work, diligence, and self-discipline. But the acceptance of such an account of success naturally produces self-doubts in students who previously had been mostly unsuccessful in school. The traditional recommendations — be disciplined, work harder — have not worked for them in the past, academic competence seems frustratingly out of reach, and, students fear, unattainable. To protect their self-worth, students adopt a defensive stance and are thereby caught in a double bind. The students suspect their own ability to do intellectual work, to handle ideas and language, yet still they hold them to be important, indeed as indicators of personal worth. These abilities, they believe, are essential for success in the world, and failure to master them is potentially crushing to their sense of self and their hopes for the future. Thus, according to London (1978), for community college students intellectual activity is simultaneously alluring, but emotionally charged and deeply problematic.

This is certainly not the situation at every community college. Institutions are too diverse to be adequately captured in a single characterization. However, most new students do have complex responses to their school experience, and few faculty fully recognize the nature of their struggle. There has been little explicit attention to the cultural conditions of teaching and learning, to the ways in which students and faculty confront, interpret, and try to make sense of one another in open-access classrooms where the cultural distance between them is greatest. The classroom, typically thought of as a neutral site for the transmission of knowledge, is often actually the scene of cultural conflict. This cultural clash, most frequently implicit, though sometimes explicit, often limits student engagement with our disciplines as faculty and students act out conflicting and profoundly divergent views of intellectual inquiry. Each classroom is the scene of negotiation between the teacher and the students. For instance, in the typical open-access classroom, teachers may not begin a course assuming that students will be committed to the work, or will even come regularly, appear for examinations, or turn in assignments. Classes will vary greatly, and these basic features must be worked out semester after semester through the "classroom treaties" struck between students and faculty (McGrath & Spear, 1991: Richardson, Fisk, & Okum, 1983). It is in the classroom exchanges among students and teachers that student frustration, disengagement, and failure is produced and experienced, and so it is in the classroom that we must look for these problems to be resolved.

The Classroom and the Culture of Disciplines

Research consistently finds that between one-third and one-half of full-time entering freshmen nationwide drop out before their second year (Noel & Levitz, 1983). Even more striking is the fact that the most critical period for new students in the first two to six weeks of the term (Tinto, 1987, 1988). Because so many students leave is the first weeks before traditional student support services may be mobilized, classroom teachers play a pivotal role in determining student success and failure. For it is in their initial encounter in the introductory course that student engagement with and commitment to school is developed or undermined. However, community college faculty have not seen this issue clearly nor developed a coherent way to analyze the nature of the problem.

A growing body of research emphasizes the difficulties that students, especially minority students and women, experience in learning mathematics and the natural sciences and calls for new curricular and pedagogical initiatives to improve student interest and success in these fields (Tobias, 1990; Orr, 1987). What is perhaps most interesting about this research is the way in which efforts which began as an attempt to identify student limitations in gaining competence in science end with an appreciation of how the standard curricular content and teaching strategies of the sciences unnecessarily discourage many students. Sheila Tobias' analysis of why many intellectually curious and able young women drop out of science after their introductory courses is a particularly striking example (Tobias, 1990). Consequently, the conventional view of student failure is increasingly seen as inadequate. It is being replaced with a more accurate understanding of how faculty teaching

styles and curricular structures exclude many students who enter with the ability and interest to succeed in academic science.

This perspective may be easily extended from science education as we explore the difficulties that students experience in understanding and gaining competence in many other disciplines. As with mathematics and the sciences, many of these difficulties have remained unrecognized, because they result from the social and cultural context of teaching and learning.

Recent work in composition theory is useful in helping us understand the particular difficulties students experience when they first encounter academic disciplines. Several important lines of research converge to show that academic disciplines develop distinctive cultures with their own intellectual methods, traditions, and concerns. Researchers and writing theorists study the role of convention in the act of composing (Bartholomae, 1985; Emig, 1977; Reither, 1985), the social construction of knowledge (Bruffee, 1984), and the new sociology of science and the study of academic disciplines (Geertz, 1983; Bazerman, 1981; Kuhn, 1970; Becher, 1989). These researchers concur in emphasizing both the density and complexity of disciplinary knowledge and communication and the specificity of discourse communities. Consequently, writing programs based on these lines of thought conceive their goal as helping initiate students into specific disciplinary cultures. The task of students is to become "knowledgeable peers" who can demonstrate their competent membership by understanding and deploying a discipline's actual forms of argument, description, and explanation. Students must struggle with the fact that learning to write and think like a biologist is very different from learning to write and think like a historian or economist. To be successful, students must, in each of their courses, undergo a kind of initiation into often quite different disciplinary cultures. In Bartholomae's provocative metaphor, students, in each new course, must "invent the university" as they struggle to "speak our language, to try on the peculiar ways of knowing, selecting, evaluating, reporting, and arguing that define the discourse of our community" (Bartholomae, 1985, p. 134).

Understood in these terms, a student's academic career consists of a series of initiations into different, somewhat loosely related, intellectual communities, each with its own norms of discourse, its special vocabulary and methods, and set of important questions. Even the best-prepared, most highly motivated college students may be frustrated navigating among diverse disciplines. This is a normal, expected feature of a student's experience (Perry, 1970).

The ordinary psychological features of the transition to college life are detailed by Tinto (1987) in his research on student retention. A student's college career, he argues, should really be seen as movement from membership in a home community to membership in a college community. If all goes well this will follow a familiar pattern of separation, transition, and incorporation (Tinto, 1987, 1988). To achieve full incorporation into the social and intellectual life of a college, students must separate themselves, or at least distance themselves, from prior association. Successful students are those who complete the social and cultural transition. Students who never fully incorporate into the new community typically fail or drop out.

However, as the work of London (1978) and others shows, this incorporation is particularly complex and difficult for nontraditional students who have little experience with or awareness of the practices and conventions of academic life. Little in their background has prepared them for it. In almost every way college seems more alien and hostile to them, unsympathetic to the ways they have brought with them from their home communities. Especially for them, college demands not just intellectual growth, but also social and cultural transformations that are profoundly bewildering and unsettling.

Within composition theory these issues have been developed most fully by those taking a social constructionist view of writing, particularly Kenneth Bruffee. Constructivism holds that rather than passively observing reality, we actively construct the meanings that frame and organize our experience. Bruffee has utilized this view to criticize the "mentalistic" assumptions of cognitive theories of writing, while

demonstrating how thinking and writing are best understood as social acts (Bruffee, 1984). Writing and thinking, in this view, are not the abstract expressions of universal cognitive abilities, but are rooted in the conventions, traditions, and practices of particular communities.

On this line, helping students learn to think and write in a discipline requires that they join that disciplinary community. This is a process that sociology conventionally terms socialization, and Bruffee offers the best conception yet available within composition theory. He emphasizes that students come to us already socialized into and able to converse in ways appropriate to the conventions and traditions of their back-home communities (Bruffee, 1989). Learning an academic discipline is a kind of resocialization which may raise conflicts with their loyalty to and dependence upon prior memberships and previous identities. Bruffee suggests that courses which are consciously designed to promote this transition be thought of as transitional or support communities that will acknowledge and aid students with the stress of change. This is why he has long advocated collaborative and small group practices.

Bruffee's work is valuable because, by focusing on how students learn to write, it urges us to focus on the conflicts that nontraditional students experience as they negotiate the transition from their back-home communities to membership in the academic communities of higher education. Once we recognize that issues of loyalty, commitment, and identity are raised for nontraditional students when they encounter disciplinary communities, we may appreciate that their socialization involves much more than merely the cognitive process of acquiring skills and knowledge. As writing theorist Joseph Williams notes, the movement from outside the disciplinary community to inside involves two deliberate acts, one by us, but also one by the student (Williams, 1989). Socialization into a discipline is potentially a very complex and lengthy process because students may not want to enter our disciplinary community, may resist the invitation, be frightened by it, or may feel pulled by divided loyalties. We have many studies of how working class students resist boring and degrading schooling (Willis, 1981). But we must recognize that nontraditional students may also resist even good willed and creative teaching when it is experienced as threatening their sense of self by challenging identities rooted in their families or neighborhoods.

Our own classrooms may become important research sites for exploring these issues if we adopt a cultural perspective on our teaching experience. To understand the classroom encounter we must become our own ethnographers, researchers as well as teachers, exploring the interaction of student culture and faculty culture as they play out in the practical interactions of the classroom.

Practices Which Promote Initiation

Successful initiation does not just involve the mastering of skills, but often a renegotiation of identity, as the student makes a transition from the back-home culture of neighborhood and family to the academic culture of the college. Commitment to academic life by nontraditional students frequently requires significant disengagement from features of their back-home culture. The complexities of initiation may perhaps be clarified by thinking of it as involving both a social and an academic dimension.

Social Integration

Community colleges have always been hampered in their ability to initiate students into collegiate life because they lack the most powerful mechanisms used by those institutions most successful at involving students. These are dormitory life and large blocks of time for student engagement in clubs and informal activities (Astin, 1982). Community colleges will never have those features of traditional academic life. In consequence, they must be much more creative in developing alternative strategies appropriate for the reality of their students' lives. The key lies in increasing the amount of involvement by students in college activities, both academic and nonacademic (Astin, 1982). Other chapters will discuss a wide range of possible strategies, so I will emphasize types of academic involvement which may increase student integration into college life.

Academic Integration

Although community colleges are the locus of much pedagogical innovation, they have never directly confronted the problem of the academic integration of nontraditional students. Their curricular forms, largely adopted from traditional four-year institutions and typical classroom practices, never directly acknowledge the complexity of the cultural dimensions of teaching and learning in the open-access classroom. Because of this there is much that may be done, both by individual teachers in their classrooms, by departments, and by the faculty as a collegial body.

1. *Reconceiving the introductory course.* The introductory course is a student's first experience of the college and is an excellent vehicle for promoting academic integration. Moreover, for students at community colleges, introductory courses are their only experience of most academic disciplines. But what counts as an appropriate "introduction" to a discipline is a much more complicated question for community colleges than for the universities where such courses originated. At the university their functions are clear, if multiple. For some students introductory courses begin them on the path to the major, for others they serve as part of their general education. But neither of these familiar functions is much of a guide to what courses should be like at community colleges.

If introductory courses in the discipline are to contribute to the initiation of students into an academic culture, then they must be designed to disclose the nature of the disciplines to students, and engage them, if only in a preliminary way, in their practices. However, the typical introductory course is still based on a textbook, with the traditional "chalk and talk," lecture-test-lecture style of instruction which emphasizes information. Disciplines, though, are not just aggregates of information, or lists of basic concepts. Introductory courses that hide the theoretical perspectives, methods, and practices that constitute the cognitive core of disciplines misrepresent the nature of disciplines to students. Such courses undermine the initiation process by projecting such a weak and uninviting picture of the academic culture.

A better way to think of the introductory course is to build on the notion of students undergoing an initiation into academic life. In this view, the introductory course is better conceived on the model of senior members initiating novices into a community. One way to understand the practical difference this makes for teaching is through the distinction offered by Stanley Fish (1990) between helping students "know what we know," the aim of the standard introductory course, and helping them "know how we know what we know," which requires their immersion in the cognitive styles and conventions of our discipline.

This may be done in a variety of ways, each of which tries to redesign the course in ways that promote active engagement, discussion, and critical reading and writing by the students. The essential starting point is creating a process whereby faculty may discuss and experiment with ways of initiating students into their discipline. One model, which has been adopted by a number of community colleges, has been developed at La Guardia Community College. This approach focuses on enhancing students' literacy abilities to facilitate their understanding of disciplinary courses. They do this through integrated skills reinforcement (ISR), which provides faculty with practical advice for integrating more sophisticated forms of reading, writing, and speaking into content courses. Selected faculty are given release time to participate in a year-long training program, where 12 to 20 participants meet weekly in small interdisciplinary work groups led by a colleague who has gone through the program. Each faculty member devises specific classroom applications of ISR suitable for the particular course. As they field-test the materials they may use the group for feedback and advice. Over 80% of the La Guardia faculty have now gone through this process, creating a critical mass of faculty who have reflected on and discussed strategies for emphasizing literacy abilities as a way of drawing students into their disciplines. The Community College of Philadelphia utilizes a somewhat related approach to faculty and curriculum development. The Transfer Opportunities Program brings together interdisciplinary teams of faculty in the social sciences and humanities to develop four-person teams who construct and

teach integrated, twelve-hour "Introduction to the Humanities," and "Introduction to the Social Sciences" courses. Faculty are given release time to spend a semester in weekly seminar meetings to discuss the best ways of introducing students to their subject areas, and to identify primary readings and develop writing assignments and other experiences to enhance students' literacy abilities. During the next semester they teach on interdisciplinary teams and again meet weekly to discuss and revise their materials and approaches.

2. *Writing across the curriculum.* Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) programs are well established at many institutions and may be a useful resource in reconceiving the introductory courses and other courses to enhance student initiation. WAC programs take several different forms, but their basic assumption is that most student writing is of very limited educational value, because it takes the form of "transactional" writing, that is writing that informs the reader of what the writer knows (Brinton, Burgess, Martin, & Rosen, 1975). WAC programs help faculty to improve the utility of student writing by designing writing assignments that emphasize "writing to learn" defined as writing to discover and formulate ideas, as well as communicating substance to others (Fulwiler, 1987).

The traditional practices of WAC programs, such as faculty development workshops and consultation to departments, may be used to help faculty focus on how writing may help initiate students into their disciplines. Activities such as faculty workshops and seminars are important, because they help overcome the isolation of the individual classroom. They give faculty the opportunity to publicly and collegially address the question of what counts as sophisticated writing (and reading) in their courses, and how well constructed assignments may facilitate student learning. Stanley and Ambron (1991) provide a variety of models of how this may be accomplished.

3. *Strengthening disciplinary cultures.* Each discipline expresses a somewhat distinct culture, which presents its own particular challenges for students. One way to strengthen disciplines is to help faculty identify how their own intellectual and pedagogical commitments are expressed in their courses. This is best done through collegial staff development activities in which faculty share and discuss readings, exam questions, and writing assignments with an eye on how the discipline is represented in these materials. One model of this is the academic culture audit (McGrath & Spear, 1991). These are modeled on traditional curriculum audits, but differ in that they use group activities to disclose the tacit dimensions of schooling, the expectations, symbols, and practices that are embedded in courses.

4. *Collaborations among institutions.* Collaborative efforts between community colleges and transfer institutions provide opportunities to understand the initiation difficulties students encounter as they move between two different academic and organizational cultures. Team-taught courses may offer important clues to the differences between the two academic cultures, as faculty attempt to reach agreement on the wide range of issues that inevitably emerge — common course requirements, assignments, and norms of classroom behavior. However, faculty must come to recognize that the inevitable tensions that emerge during course planning and teaching are more than just personality clashes, that they more typically are expressions of the differing academic cultures of their institutions. Even more valuable are joint faculty development workshops and institutes, especially when they use the examination of classroom assignments and syllabi as opportunities to surface differences in expectations, practices, and views of the students. There are many current examples of fruitful collaboration. The Transfer Alliance Program at University of California at Los Angeles brings together university faculty with those from a number of area community colleges. A program at New York University links the School of Education with ten city and suburban community colleges to identify students interested in teaching careers. A recently funded program permitted faculty from Truman College to jointly develop and team teach courses with colleagues from Loyola University.

5. *Exploring student culture.* Almost all community colleges test the skill level of students when they enter the institution. Such ordinary testing

should be supplemented with cultural audits of their students as well. Colleges can not rely on national studies or anecdotal evidence; they need to assess the precise contours of the student culture at their own institutions. The critical issue is to discover what their students actually are like. With what cultural styles, ways of acting and thinking do they enter college? How do they interpret their collegiate experience? Does their understanding of education and its relation to their lives change through their experience of college, or is it reinforced there? To explore these questions in a routine and systematic way, colleges ought to supplement their standard institutional research with qualitative, ethnographic studies. One example of such research is the current project directed by Howard London and funded by the Ford and Spencer Foundations. A part of this research is designed to explore ethnographically the cultural features of selected community colleges with unusually high rates of student transfers to four-year colleges. Readers who wish more information about this continuous research project may contact Howard London (see the Addendum at the end of the References).

References

Astin, A. W. (1977). *Four critical years: Effects of college on beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Astin, A. W. (1982). *Minorities in American education: Recent trends, current prospects, and recommendations*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Bartholomae, D. (1985). Inventing the university. In M. Rose (Ed.), *When a writer can't write*. New York: Guilford.

Bazerman, C. (1981). What written knowledge does: Three examples of academic discourse. *Philosophy of the Social Sciences, 11*, 361-387.

Becher, T. (1989). *Academic tribes and territories: Intellectual enquiry and the culture of disciplines*. Milton Keynes, U.K.: Open University.

Brinton, J., Burgess, T., Martin, T., & Rosen, H. (1975). *The development of writing abilities*. New York: Macmillan.

Bruffee, A. (1984). Collaborative learning and the conversation of mankind. *College English, 46*, 635-652.

Bruffee, A. (1989). Thinking and writing as social acts. In E. P. Maimon, B. Nodine, & F. W. O'Connor (Eds.), *Thinking, reasoning and writing*. New York: Longmans.

Emig, J. (1977). Writing as a mode of learning. *College Composition and Communication, 28*, 105-129.

Fish, S. (1990). *Doing what comes naturally*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Fulwiler, T. (1987). *Teaching with writing*. Upper Montclair, NJ: Boynton/Cook.

Geertz, C. (1983). *Local knowledge*. New York: Basic Books.

Horowitz, H. L. (1987). *Campus life*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Kuhn, T. (1970). *The structure of scientific revolutions* (2nd ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

London, H. (1978). *The culture of a community college*. New York: Praeger.

McGrath, D., & Spear, M. (1991). *The academic crisis of the community college*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Noel, L., & Levitz, R. (1983). *National dropout study*. Iowa City: American College Testing Program.

Orr, E. W. (1987). *Twice as less: Black English and the performance of Black students in mathematics and science*. New York: Norton.

Pappas, J. P., & Loring, R. K. (1985). Returning learners. In L. Noel, R. Levitz, & D. Saluri (Eds.), *Increasing Student Retention*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Perry, W. (1970). *Forms of intellectual and ethical development in the college years: A scheme*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Reither, J. A. (1985). Writing and knowing: Toward redefining the writing process. *College English, 47*, 620-628.

Richardson, R. C., Jr., Fisk, E., & Okum, M. (1983). *Literacy in the open-access college*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Riesman, D. (1980). *On higher education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Stanley, L., & Ambron, J. (1991). *Writing across the curriculum in community colleges*. New Directions for Community Colleges, No. 73. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Tinto, V. (1987). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Tinto, V. (1988). Stages of student departure. *Journal of Higher Education, 56*, 438-455.

Tobias, S. (1990). They're not dumb, they're different. *Change Magazine, 22*, 10-30.

Weis, L. (1985). *Between two worlds: Black students in an urban community college*. Boston: Routledge.

Williams, J. M. (1989). *The problem of finding the right metaphor*. In E. P. Maimon, B. Nodine, & F. W. O'Conner (Eds.), *Thinking, reasoning and writing*. New York: Longmans.

Willis, P. (1981). *Learning to labor: How working class kids get working class jobs*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Addendum

Dr. Howard London
Professor of Sociology and Anthropology
Bridgewater State College
Bridgewater, MA 02325
Telephone: (508) 697-1353

Chapter 13

Academic Advising: Clearing a Path to Student Success

Margaret C. King

Academic advising is the only structured service on community college campuses that guarantees students' interaction with a concerned representative of the institution. It may be viewed as the hub of the wheel, with connecting links to all of the other support services available to students. As a result, it is a critical component of the educational services provided for students and a key factor in helping students adjust to college life and become integrated into the academic and social systems of our institutions. That integration is directly linked to student success, satisfaction, and persistence.

Academic advising is more than scheduling and registration. To be effective, it must be viewed as a developmental process, one that considers a student's life, career, and educational plans. The following definition is offered as a foundation for the remainder of this chapter:

Academic advising is a developmental process which assists students in the clarification of their life and career goals and in the development of educational plans for the realization of these goals. It is a decision-making process by which students realize their maximum educational potential through communication and information exchanges with an adviser; it is continuous, multifaceted, and the responsibility of both student and adviser. The adviser serves as a facilitator of communication, a coordinator of learning experiences through course and career planning and academic progress review, and an agent of referral to other campus agencies as necessary (Crockett, 1984, p. 1).

Academic Advising, Retention, and Transfer

Academic Advising and Retention

Tinto (1987) developed a model of persistence that identifies the importance of student integration into the academic and social systems of our institutions. That integration occurs primarily through a student's interaction with faculty, staff, and other students. When students become well-integrated, their campus experience is a positive one. That reinforces their goals and commitments to earning a degree from a given institution, and they are more likely to persist.

A variety of studies have applied Tinto's model to two- and four-year colleges. Utilizing questions focused on student's informal interaction with faculty and student perceptions of faculty concern for student development and teaching,

Pascarella and Terenzini (1980) demonstrated the importance of academic and social integration in student persistence. Additional studies focusing on two-year colleges found similar results (Pascarella & Chapman, 1983; Pascarella, 1986). Halpin (1990), in a study of entering students in a two-year college in upstate New York, also came to a similar conclusion and suggested that "... the creation of institutional mechanisms to maximize student/faculty contact is likely to result in greater levels of integration and hence persistence" (p. 4). One such mechanism is academic advising. Viewed from another perspective, academic advisers may play a key role in addressing the themes of attrition identified by Noel, Levitz, and Saluri (1985). Those themes include (a) academic boredom, (b) uncertainty about major and career goal, (c) transition and adjustment difficulties, (d) limited or unrealistic expectations about college, (e) academic underpreparedness, (f) incompatibility, and (g) relevance. By practicing developmental advising, advisers are often in a key position to help students take steps in making decisions about majors and career, take courses appropriate for their skill level and interest, and make the adjustments they will need to make.

Crockett (1978) describes academic advising as a cornerstone of student retention and notes that, when provided effectively, advising may help students develop more mature educational and career goals, strengthen the relationship between academic preparation and the world of work, and contribute to the development of a more positive attitude and better academic performance. Kemerer (1985) states, "Virtually every study of retention has shown that a well-developed advising program is an important retention strategy. Advisers who are knowledgeable, enthusiastic, and like working with students can often make the difference between a potential dropout and a persister" (p. 8).

Academic Advising and Transfer

Just as advising plays a critical role in student persistence, it also plays a critical role in the transfer process. According to Boyer (1988), two-year colleges enroll approximately 43% of the nation's undergraduates and 51% of all first-time entering freshmen. Many of these students do not want or need to go on to a four-year school to attain their goals; therefore, transfer is appropriate and desirable. Yet Watkins (1990) has estimated that while as many as one-third of these students initially plan to continue their education, only 15 - 25% actually do so.

Academic advisers can provide the support and encouragement many entering freshmen need to consider transfer as an option. They can assist students in identifying appropriate four-year schools and in utilizing the articulation agreements that may be available. They can also help students overcome or learn how to deal with various obstacles to transfer. Those obstacles may include academic and articulation barriers, inadequate support systems, economic barriers, bureaucratic barriers, geographical barriers, age impediments, and racial and ethnic concerns (Wechsler, 1989). Advisers can help students explore options, prepare for what they will encounter upon transferring, make connections with appropriate staff at the four-year college, and develop strategies to overcome any obstacles that may exist.

Organizational Models

Up until the early 1980s, little attention was paid to organizational models of academic advising. This inattention was largely due to a belief that similarities were limited because of the uniqueness of our institutions, and because of the blurring of the distinction between organizational models and delivery systems. However, research by Habley (1983) and Habley and McCauley (1987) identified seven organizational models of advising on college campuses. That research was expanded in the American College Testing (ACT) Program's Third and Fourth National Surveys on Academic Advising. Those models, with data on the prevalence of each model from ACT's Fourth National Survey (Habley, 1993a) are as follows:

Faculty Only Model. In this model, each student is assigned to a specific faculty member for advising, generally someone in the student's program of study. Undecided students may be assigned to faculty at large, to liberal arts faculty, to faculty who volunteer to advise them, or to faculty with lighter advising loads. This model

was utilized by 27% of public two-year colleges responding to the ACT survey and is the only model in which the designation of faculty refers to both the organizational model and the delivery system. While there may be an overall advising coordinator, the supervision of advisers is generally decentralized in the academic subunits.

Supplementary Model. While faculty serve as advisers for all students in this model, there is also an advising office that serves as an information clearinghouse and referral resource, but has no original jurisdiction for approving advising transactions. The office may have a coordinator. It may also provide resources, implement adviser training, as well as develop, maintain, and update information systems. Supervision of faculty advisers occurs in the academic subunits. This model was utilized in six percent of the public two-year colleges responding to the ACT survey.

Split Model. The initial advising of students in this model is split between faculty members in academic subunits and the staff of an advising office. The advising office has original jurisdiction for advising a specific group of students (e.g., undecided or underprepared students, athletes). Once specific conditions have been met, such as declaring a major, students are then assigned to advisers in their respective academic subunits. The advising office has a coordinator or director and may have campus-wide coordinating responsibility. The office may also serve as a referral resource for students assigned to advisers in the academic subunits. This model was utilized by 20% of public two-year colleges.

Dual Model. In the dual advising model, students have two advisers. While faculty members provide advising related to the students' program of study, advisers in an advising office provide advising related to academic policies and registration procedures. The advising office also generally advises undecided students and typically has a coordinator with campus-wide coordinating responsibilities. This model was utilized by eight percent of public two-year colleges.

Total Intake Mode. In this model, all initial advising of students is done by advisers in the advising office until a set of institutionally predetermined conditions have been met. Examples of conditions could be completion of the first semester, or completion of a specific number of credits. A director or dean of the advising office may have responsibility for campus-wide coordination of advising. This model was utilized by six percent of public two-year colleges.

Satellite Model. In this model, advising offices provide advising for all students whose majors are within a particular college or school. Undecided students are generally advised in a separate satellite office that has responsibility for overall campus coordination or advising and for providing support to all advisers. It was used by only one percent of public two-year colleges responding to the survey.

Self-Contained Model. In the self-contained model, all advising takes place in a centralized unit. That unit is administered by a dean or director who has responsibility for all advising functions on the campus. In the ACT research, this was the predominant model used at public two-year colleges, with 31% of those responding indicating its use.

Decisions regarding the most appropriate organizational model for a given campus may not be made without consideration of the mission and organizational structure of the institution, the nature and needs of the student population, the role of the faculty, and the programs, policies, and procedures of the institution. All of these will impact on the way advising services should be organized and delivered. An institution with a very diverse student population and with numerous and complex policies and procedures will need a more centralized and intrusive advising system than an institution that is less complex and more homogeneous.

Delivery Systems

There are five key groups of people on our campuses who can provide excellent advising services for students. They include faculty, professional (full-time) advisers, counselors, peer advisers, and paraprofessional advisers. However there are strengths and weaknesses of each group, particularly when viewed according to the following criteria: (a) accessibility and availability of the adviser to students, (b) priority

placed on advising by the advisor, (c) the adviser's field of study, (d) adviser's knowledge of student development theory, (e) training required, (f) cost, and (g) credibility with faculty and staff (King, 1993). Determining which of those criteria are most important within an institution will impact on a decision regarding which delivery system to use.

The delivery of advising services may be greatly enhanced through a freshman seminar program, in which the adviser teaches her advisees in that seminar course. Advising may also be enhanced through computer- assisted advising, defined as "a computer program that stores and matches degree requirements and student academic records. The records produced are evaluative reports that show graduation requirements and each student's progress in completing those requirements" (Spencer, Peterson, & Kramer, 1983). Among the benefits are provision of more accurate information in less time, cost, and the freedom it provides advisers from many of the clerical functions of advising (Bellenger & Bellenger, 1987; Spencer et al., 1983).

Key Components to Effective Advising Systems

Effective advising programs include the following key components: (a) a comprehensive institutional policy statement to guide the advising activities, (b) a specific individual who is designated by the institution to direct or coordinate advising activities, (c) a systematic training program for all advisers, (d) evaluation of both the overall advising program and of advisers, and (e) recognition and reward for exemplary advising.

Policy Statement

Institutions should have a clear written statement of philosophy to guide advising activities. This statement should include program goals and should establish expectations for advisers and advisees. Other topics that might be included are delivery strategies, adviser selection, adviser training, adviser evaluation, and adviser recognition and reward (Habley, 1993b).

Coordination

To be effective, advising programs must have a coordinator or director who devotes a significant portion of time to that responsibility. Based on responses to the ACT survey, the most common titles of persons in that role on community college campuses are director of counseling (24%), director or coordinator of academic advising (17%), vice president or dean of academic affairs (11%), and vice president or dean of student affairs (11%). Of that group, nearly two-thirds (66%) of those who had responsibility for academic advising reported that they spent less than one-quarter of their time on advising, while 16% spent one-half of their time and 11% spent three-quarters of their time. Only seven percent indicated that academic advising was a full-time responsibility (Habley, 1993a).

Training

Adviser training and development is a critical component of effective advising programs, as academic advising should be offered only by personnel who receive systematic skills training (Winston, 1984). Training programs should have objectives that are specific, realistic, and measurable, and consideration must be given to content, audience, and techniques in the development of those programs.

Content of adviser training programs may be broken down into three components: (a) key concepts in advising that advisers should understand, such as definition of advising, relationship between advising and student persistence, adviser and advisee rights and responsibilities; (b) information that advisers should know, such as programs, policies, procedures, referral services, and resources; and (c) relationship skills that advisers should demonstrate, such as communication skills, referral skills, decision-making skills, and skills for working with multicultural students.

In designing an adviser training program, it is important to consider the skills of the advisers to be trained, the experience they have in advising, and their willingness to participate in such a program. A program for teaching faculty who may or may not view advising as a priority

would be quite different from a program for full-time advisers or counselors. For example, faculty advisers may need more of an emphasis on academic policies and procedures, communication skills and student development theory, while full-time advisers would need more of a focus on academic programs and courses.

A variety of training techniques and formats may be effectively utilized. Techniques might include an external presenter, panel discussions, case studies, brainstorming, or role playing. Formats may range from a single workshop of one day or less to a series of short workshops held throughout the year. Again, the techniques and formats utilized will be dependent on the advisers to be trained.

Evaluation

In order to gain an understanding of the quality of academic advising on any campus, regular and systematic evaluation of both the program and individual advisers is essential. Evaluation may enhance adviser services, may assist in planning future administrative policy, support merit raises, promote increased administrative support, and identify areas for in-service training

The National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) (1989) suggests that program evaluation focus on the following: (a) mission, (b) selection process for advisers, (c) orientation and training, (d) communication of information, (e) recognition and reward process, (f) the overall advising system, (g) the needs assessment process, (h) the delivery system, (i) the level of support, (j) the resources available, and (k) how well such critical issues as confidentiality and access to services are addressed. Students, administrators, faculty, and staff should all have input into the evaluation process, and results should be used to enhance advising services.

NACADA also suggests that individual advisers should be evaluated on how well they (a) assist students in self-understanding and self-acceptance, (b) assist students in their consideration of life goals by relating skills, abilities and values to careers, the world of work, and the nature and purpose of higher education, (c) assist students in developing educational plans consistent with life goals and objectives, (d) assist students in developing decision-making skills, (e) provide accurate information about institutional policies, procedures, resources, and programs, (f) make referrals to other institutions or community support services, (g) assist students in the initial and continuing evaluation of progress toward established goals and educational plans, and (h) provide information about students either individually or collectively to the institution, colleges, or academic departments. Results may be used in either a formative manner — for self-development and improvement of performance — or a summative manner — for personnel decisions such as tenure, merit pay, or promotion.

Broad institutional support is essential in implementing an evaluation program. It is also critical that advisers have input into all aspects of the program, including the selection or development of an evaluation instrument, the design of the process, and the determination of how the evaluation results will be used.

Recognition and Reward

Academic advising should be offered only by personnel who are rewarded for skillful performance (Winston, 1984). Rewards are evidence of administrative support for advising services and may enhance the status of those receiving them, thereby improving the quality of service provided for students. Rewards may range from release time from instruction or committee work, to salary increments, consideration in promotion and tenure, awards for excellence in advising, or ceremonies recognizing exemplary advisers. Advisers should be involved in the development of a recognition and reward process in order to ensure that the reward is meaningful.

An Ideal Model

The ideal model for academic advising on a two-year campus would be the total-intake model. There would be a centralized advising office with a full-time director and staffed by a combination of full-time advisers or counselors, part-time faculty, and paraprofessionals or

peers. All advisers would be carefully selected, would receive systematic skills training, would have advising as a specific responsibility, and would be evaluated and receive appropriate recognition and reward for exemplary advising.

The advising office would provide all advising for students for their first two semesters, at which time students would be assigned to faculty advisers in their own programs of study. The advising office would interact regularly with admissions, financial aid, registration, placement testing, counseling, academic support services, and with the academic departments. It would have responsibility for pre-service and in-service training for all advisers, for evaluation of the advising system and advisers, for recognition and reward of exemplary advising, for development of both adviser and advisee handbooks, for the development, maintenance and distribution of advising files, and for coordination of a freshman seminar program.

As with all models, there are advantages and disadvantages. This model would be somewhat expensive and it does break the continuity of the adviser/advisee relationship developed in the student's first year. However, on the positive side, it utilizes the best advising resources during the times that are most critical to student success and retention. Well-trained advisers with student development backgrounds are available to assist students during the first semester or year when they are most apt to explore various programs and declare or change majors. Yet students gain the expertise of faculty when they are more settled in their programs and need faculty assistance in making connections among current study, future study, and work. It provides a way of easing heavy faculty advising loads and guarantees that advising services are coordinated and supervised.

Summary

Academic advising is the only structured service on campus that guarantees students interaction with a concerned representative of the institution. Organized and delivered effectively, advising may be a key factor in helping students adjust to college and become integrated into the academic and social systems of our institutions. That integration leads to student success, satisfaction, and persistence.

For Additional Information

The National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) is a valuable resource for administrators and others who seek information about academic advising. Incorporated in 1979, with 429 members, NACADA's membership now numbers close to 4000 and includes faculty, professional advisers, counselors, administrators, and others interested in advising from across the United States and Canada.

To address critical issues in advising, NACADA publishes a journal and a newsletter, hosts one national and ten regional conferences annually, runs a consultant bureau, and in partnership with the American College Testing (ACT) Program, hosts the Summer Institute on Academic Advising and the ACT/NACADA Awards Program. Information about NACADA may be obtained from the NACADA National Office, Kansas State University, 2323 Anderson Ave., Manhattan, KS 66502.

The National Clearinghouse for Academic Advising is a repository and distribution center for information about all aspects of academic advising. Cosponsored by NACADA, the Clearinghouse was established by and is located in University College at The Ohio State University.

References

Bellenger, J. E., & Bellenger, D. N. (1987). Guidelines for computerizing your information system for academic program counseling: Dealing with people problems. *NASPA Journal, 24*(4).

Boyer, E. L. (1988). *Building communities: A vision for a new century*. Washington, DC: American Association for Community and Junior Colleges.

Crockett, D. S. (1978). Academic advising: A cornerstone of student retention. In L. Noel (Ed.), *Reducing the Dropout Rate*. New Directions for Student Services, No. 3. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Crockett, D. S. (1984). *Advising skills, techniques, and resources.* Iowa City: American College Testing Program.

Habley, W. R. (1983). Organizational structures for academic advising: Models and implications. *Journal of College Student Personnel, 24*(6), 535-540.

Habley, W. R. (1993a). *Fulfilling the promise?* Iowa City: American College Testing Program.

Habley, W. R. (1993b). The organization and effectiveness of academic advising in community colleges. In M. C. King (Ed.), *Academic advising: Organizing and delivering services for student success.* New Directions for Community Colleges, No. 82. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Habley, W. R., & McCauley, M. E. (1987). The relationship between institutional characteristics and the organization of advising services. *NACADA Journal, 7*(1), 27-39.

Halpin, R. L. (1990). An application of the Tinto model to the analysis of freshman persistence in a community college. *Community College Review, 17*(4), 22-32.

Kemerer, F. R. (1985). The role of deans, department chairs and faculty in enrollment management. *College Board Review, 134*, 4-8.

King, M. C. (1993). Advising models and delivery systems. In M. C. King (Ed.), *Academic advising: Organizing and delivering services for student success.* New Directions for Community Colleges, No. 82. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

National Academic Advising Association. (1989). *Task force on assessment.* Newark, DE: National Academic Advising Association, University of Delaware.

Noel, L., Levitz, R., Saluri, D., & Associates. (1985). *Increasing student retention: Effective programs and practices for reducing the dropout rate.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Pascarella, E. T. (1986). Long-term persistence of two-year college students. *Research in Higher Education, 24*(1), 47-71.

Pascarella, E. T., & Chapman, D. W. (1983). A multi-institutional, path analytic validation of Tinto's model of college withdrawal. *American Educational Research Journal, 20*(1), 87-102.

Pascarella, E. T., & Terenzini, P. T. (1980). Predicting freshman persistence and voluntary dropout decisions from a theoretical model. *Journal of Higher Education, 51*(1), 60-75.

Spencer, R. W., Peterson, E. D., & Kramer, G. L. (1983). Designing and implementing a computer-assisted academic advisement program. *Journal of College Student Personnel*, 24.

Tinto, V. (1987). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Watkins, B. T. (1990). Two-year institutions under pressure to ease transfers. *The Chronicle of Higher Education, 36*(21), pp. A1, A37-38.

Wechsler, H. (1989). *The transfer challenge: Removing barriers, maintaining commitment.* Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges.

Winston, R. B., Jr., & Associates. (1984). *Developmental academic advising: Addressing students' educational, career, and personal needs.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Chapter 14

Supplemental Instruction: Supporting the Classroom Experience

Deanna C. Martin, Robert Blanc, & David R. Arendale

Writing in 1929, Virginia Woolf argued that the one advantage that was almost beyond attainment for a woman university student of Woolf's social class was "a room of one's own." She was, of course, addressing social, economic, and academic issues as she compared the opulence and advantage of the male milieu with the very limited, marginalized circumstances all women then endured.

Today, other differences exist, and gender is not the sole barrier that imposes restrictions. Students from economically privileged backgrounds enjoy opportunities not available to the less privileged. Additionally, differences appear between those who work and those who do not; those with family responsibilities and those without; those with a tradition of education in the family and those without; those from exemplary secondary schools and those from substandard schools — in short, all those who are more likely to enroll in local community colleges and those whose paths more likely lead them directly into universities. The disadvantages which plague many community college students are largely congruent with factors that researchers have long associated with lack of college success. Tinto (1993) and others have identified five clusters of experiences associated with student attrition that can be applied to many students as they attempt to make the transition from high school to college: difficulty in adjusting to the college environment; experiencing academic and social difficulty; suffering from incongruence between student expectations and institutional demands; a feeling of social isolation; and serendipity.

According to Tinto, effective models of retention stress the need for students to be integrated into the academic and social dimensions of the college community (Tinto, 1993). An interpersonal support system is important for all first-year students despite their background and experience (Upcraft & Gardner, 1989). Two-year colleges have set up many services to help their students. The Freshman Year Experience (FYE) movement has been strongly embraced by two-year colleges (Fidler & Fidler, 1991), and over approximately 70% of such institutions offer some version of a first-year seminar for their students (Barefoot, 1992).

The present volume details the ways in which Freshman Year Experience programs address these issues directly in the curriculum with courses and in many cocurricular activities designed to ameliorate academic and social difficulties. This chapter highlights a collaborative

learning program, Supplemental Instruction (SI), which brings directly into the general curriculum the ideology and emphasis of the Freshman Year Experience. Widespread use of the SI model, careful evaluation, and many replication studies in the U.S. and abroad have documented SI's effectiveness in terms of both educational outcomes and cost.

Description of SI

Supplemental Instruction (SI) is a student academic assistance program that increases academic performance and retention through its structured use of collaborative learning strategies. The SI program targets traditionally difficult academic courses, those that have excessively high rates of D or F final course grades and/or withdrawals. In cooperation with the course instructor, SI provides regularly scheduled, out-of-class, peer-facilitated sessions where students have the opportunity to discuss, process, and interact vis-a-vis lectures, reading, studying, and preparing for examination (Martin, 1977). Advocates of SI believe intense student interaction focusing on academic concerns provides a particularly powerful form of peer bonding, because the primary mission of institution is academic, and thus students are bonding around the central issues of their academic lives.

Integration of study skills with the course content stands as a crucial difference between SI and other forms of collaborative learning. It is not just that students are working together, but it is the planned integration and practice of study strategies during these sessions that sets SI apart. We believe that by combining *what to learn* with *how to learn it*, students can develop both content competency and transferable academic skills. SI sessions capitalize on the use of the teachable moment, i.e., the moment when information is either requested by students or the SI leader finds the information essential to efficient completion of a task, to introduce, apply, and model appropriate learning strategies with the course material.

Research has shown that teaching study skills in isolation from content has little impact on the students' academic performance (Dimon, 1988; Keimig, 1983; Stahl, Simpson, & Hayes, 1992). While students can be taught elaborate note-taking and text-reading strategies, these skills are not necessarily put to use in subsequent courses. Also, different disciplines will require different note-taking styles: A chemistry text will be used differently from an American history text. As SI leaders model appropriate questioning and reasoning, students begin to internalize aspects of thinking strategies that will carry over into their individual and group study.

Typically, the SI process begins in the first day of the class when the course instructor introduces the SI leader. The SI leader then describes SI to the class and surveys the students to establish a schedule for the SI sessions. All students in the instructor's class are invited, and attendance is voluntary. Students of varying abilities participate, and no effort is made to place students in different tracks based on academic ability.

It is noteworthy that many underprepared students who might avoid seeking assistance will participate in SI because they perceive no remedial aspect and no stigma attaches to participation. Such stigmata may cause motivation problems for developmental students (Somers, 1988). SI is a cost-effective program both in comparison with one-on-one tutoring programs and increasing student persistence and graduation rates (Martin & Arendale, 1993).

Designed originally in 1973 to retain minority and disadvantaged medical students at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, SI soon found its way into other tertiary institutions seeking an institutional approach to retention, including many community colleges. In 1983, SI won approval by the United States Department of Education as an exemplary program and since 1985 it has received government funding that has been used to provide SI training for faculty and staff in 517 institutions. Nearly 200 of those institutions are community colleges.

Unlike most other retention efforts, SI is a comprehensive program, not simply a philosophical approach to a problem. Firmly rooted in devel-

opmental psychology and constructionist thought, SI goes beyond its theoretical bases to provide a blueprint for effective application and evaluation. The SI program includes training workshops for supervisors, manuals for training campus SI leaders, guidelines for contextualizing SI to meet specific campus goals, specific evaluation procedures, continuous technical assistance from the University of Missouri-Kansas City and UMKC-certified trainers within the SI network, and national standards against which to compare local results. Additionally, SI practitioners interact regularly through an international computer mail network.

Each year the Supplemental Instruction office at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, conducts a telephone survey of SI programs across the U.S. This year the survey was conducted during August. Excerpts from several interviews concerning two-year colleges are included in this chapter.

Glendale Community College, in Glendale, CA, is a member institution of the SI network. During the August telephone survey they reported success with SI in calculus courses. One student's comment represents a typical response to both the academic and social value of SI: "What I really liked about the SI was that if I had any questions, Dr. Kolpas or the other helpers didn't tell us the answer. Instead, they let us think about the problem, set it up, and solve it ourselves. I also liked the one-on-one help and the friends I made." And, as most of us recall from our math classes, learning how to think a problem through and set it up correctly is the key to arriving at the correct solution.

SI Responds to the Tinto Paradigm

Once SI had been established in a wide range of tertiary institutions, and once the program began to be acknowledged, the staff began to look for factors that would help us explain the success of the model. The work of Tinto (1993) provided one of the most useful structures. If, as Tinto wrote, there were five factors that plagued students in their first year in college, then it might be reasonable to examine SI from that perspective to see in what ways the model responds to the constellation of factors that Tinto associates with college failure: adjustment, isolation, difficulty, incongruence, and serendipity (Tinto, 1993).

Factor One: Adjustment

Tinto recognizes that adjustment to the new environment of college presents a problem to all students. An explanation of this phenomenon may be student inability to separate from prior associations; that is, new college students do not progress personally, socially, and academically beyond a high school frame of mind. To some, the problem is insuperable, and of course these students become attrition statistics. Although SI does little to lessen separation anxiety, it does offer guidance and associations in the form of structured study groups and student mentors. Both facilitate adjustment to tertiary education.

Evaluative data suggest that SI meets the needs not only of the students whom faculty typically regard as marginal, but others with much higher aspirations. Our interviews with students reveal that many fail to meet their academic goals because they have no experience in the milieu of tertiary education. For example, many interpret things they are told literally. The professor says, "You are not graded on attendance, but you are responsible for the notes." Only after the student has failed the first exam and made a personal appointment does the professor explain, "Of course you are expected to attend the class. I only meant to assure you that your final grade is not specifically lowered because you miss a lecture. Furthermore I did not mean that you were responsible for acquiring a copy of the notes taken by your friend. I meant . . ." This latter conversation is mentorship, but it comes too late.

The role of the SI leader, usually a peer or near-peer, is central to SI effectiveness. SI leaders, in training for their mentor role, find support for the following ways they might help their students. This list of considerations gives a sample of the very specific instructions offered to SI leaders in their training, where they are encouraged to make explicit the implicit messages students encounter.

1. *Be explicit about expectations.* Students need to know more about the performance criteria for the course than the number of exams scheduled and how much each counts. They need to know both what objective measures constitute excellent work and what excellent work looks like. They need to see how a grade is calculated. Many students have come from secondary schools where grading seems arbitrary, capricious, or whimsical, and they have little or no experience with objective evaluation.

2. *Be explicit by modeling your thinking.* Underprepared students need a window into the mind of a successful student. For many, their idea of intellectual mastery of a subject is the high school history teacher who knows her textbook so well that she can tell you from memory the page where a picture may be found. "She has the textbook *memorized*," they say, in awe of such learning. And, until they learn otherwise, they believe the same is true of their professors. Therefore, when an SI leader answers a question, she must lead off with something like this: "Let me tell you how I think about that." Then tell them.

3. *Be explicit about the intellectual tools of the discipline.* Help students develop strategies to organize information. Simple visual matrices allow for organization of some kinds of information. Differences among bacteria, for example, fit this kind of organization, as do differences among national or local governments with respect to a finite number of characteristics. Students need to see discipline-specific information patterns.

4. *Be explicit about class resources.* What seems perfectly obvious to mentors is often only vaguely familiar to students. For example, students do not typically know to value syllabi. Few secondary school teachers use them; therefore, students lack experience with this fundamental organizer. The way to emphasize the importance of the syllabus is to refer to it at the beginning of each session, each week, or each unit. Students will value resources to the extent that their mentors value the same resources.

Factor Two: Isolation

Many education leaders, including Tinto (1993), deplore the lack of significant interpersonal relationships among students who attend college. As returning adult students attend college in greater numbers, the institution becomes increasingly heterogeneous in nature. This is especially critical for two-year colleges. The institution must take proactive steps to provide an environment for development of community among today's students. Active learning, smaller classes, more interactions between the professor and students have been suggested as strategies to develop community (Tobias, 1992). In Astin's latest study on the impact of college, he concurred: ". . . [T]he student's peer group is simply the most potent source of influence on growth and development during the undergraduate years" (Astin, 1993, p. 398).

Typically, student affairs professionals regard extracurricular activities on campus as the venue for countering alienation. SI, however, offers a curricular venue for the same purpose. In SI, the academic work of students becomes the nexus around which various personal bonds are built. SI brings students together in small groups for class study sessions. For some of these students, this is their only time to interact with classmates. With competing time commitments of work, family, and commuting, many students no longer have the luxury of remaining on campus without a specific meeting or purpose in mind. Students develop a sense of common purpose during SI sessions.

May Garland, former national training director of SI, now directs the SI program at Linn-Benton Community College in Albany, OR. During the 1994 regular telephone survey conducted by the Supplemental Instruction research staff, Garland reported that the nursing faculty members are strongly supportive of SI because it provides structure for the creation of continuous learning groups. The staff believe these learning groups are essential in retaining students through the rigorous curriculum. Shlipak (1988) found that collaborative learning groups are critical for females in science major course work. Given that the sciences are areas in which women have not historically been well represented, SI potentially has a positive effect on the attempt to reduce the gender gap in certain disciplines.

To help foster more collaborative learning and peer support at Onondaga Community College, in Syracuse, NY, the school has created what it calls "SI-Plus," an adaptation of the basic SI model. Barbara Risser provides leadership with the campus SI program. Risser, responding to the 1994 telephone survey, reported that SI-Plus provides an introduction to the study group experience for students who are just beginning to enroll in college level course work. SI-Plus is meant as a bridge to help inexperienced students adjust to college level work. The regular SI program is reserved for the traditional high risk courses. Some students in succeeding semesters establish their own independent study groups if SI or SI-Plus is not available in the class. In these various fashions, SI serves to counter the isolation students often experience on the tertiary campus.

Factor Three: Difficulty

Undoubtedly, the level of intellectual functioning required at the tertiary level, the rapid flow of information in abstract media, and the necessity to perform in a timely manner require all students to stretch intellectually to meet collegiate standards. Some can function independently at this level, others only with appropriate support, and still others seemingly not at all. The second group was the original target of the first SI program. On a campus that eschewed remedial and developmental courses and that lacked resources for an individual tutorial program, SI was created to fill the vacuum. The rate of student retention was set as the benchmark by which SI would be judged. Therefore, data collection from the beginning focused on student performance, retention, re-enrollment, and graduation.

To remain abreast of developments in the field of Supplemental Instruction, the faculty and staff of the SI program receive data from the many academic institutions using SI. Data analysis compares those participating in SI with those electing not to participate. The independent variable is the group; the dependent variable is the final course grade. Research studies on many campuses have assessed the impact of a wide range of co-variates, e.g., level of motivation, prior academic achievement, gender, age, and ethnicity, in an effort to measure the effect of SI as a determinant of student success. In each instance, results have continued to show that SI is strongly correlated with final course grade when controlling for these other factors (Martin & Arendale, 1993).

Other studies have analyzed SI results longitudinally, within a single class offered by a single lecturer using a single text and a constant grading scale over several succeeding years. These studies have demonstrated the heightening effect of SI on total class performance over a multi-year span from the inception of the SI program (Blanc, DeBuhr, & Martin, 1983). Other researchers have employed more sophisticated statistical procedures to evaluate SI (Kenney, 1989, 1990). While most of the research on SI derives from four-year institutions, the data presented here are drawn entirely from community college sources.

Participating institutions. Since 1982, faculty and staff from 183 public and private two-year institutions have received formal training to implement the SI model on their campus. The following tables were compiled from 59 selected two-year public institutions that met the criteria: (a) their data collection procedures conformed to recommendations of the UMKC staff, (b) they transmitted their data for inclusion in a timely fashion, and (c) they broadly represented a geographically diverse area in the United States.

Only public two-year institutions were included in this study. Of the 496 two-year course reports in the national SI database that were available for analysis, 480 were from public institutions. While reports from the private two-year institutions were similar, the authors believed those data would not contribute to the validity of the study, nor would data from very few institutions permit generalization to private two-year colleges.

Some comparisons rely on grouping of final grades as "A/B" and "D/W/F." These comparisons have been useful. The former category represents "honor" grades; the latter, "unsuccessful enrollments" — "unsuccessful" in the sense that students receiving grades at this level are not typically permitted to continue in their

curriculum. The goal of SI has been to reduce the numbers in the latter category, but an unexpected salutary side effect has been an increase in the former category of "honor" grades.

Data analysis. Standard statistical methods were used in analysis of the data comparing student outcomes. The requisite level of significance was set at $p < .05$ to conform with standard practice in educational research. Independent *t*-tests were selected as most appropriate for comparing final course grades, despite lack of universal standards for such grading and the obvious fact that a grade may represent ordinal data in some instances and interval data in others. Chi-square tests were used in comparing groups according to percentages of A and B final course grades and percentage of D and F final course grades and withdrawals.

Because SI participation stands as the key independent variable in the study, careful attention was given to the definition of "participation" as "attending one or more SI sessions." That minimum of "one" seemed most appropriate because we counted all who withdrew from courses as "unsuccessful enrollments." Thus those who withdrew after attending even a single SI session would be counted as negative outcomes in the "participant" category. In this way we sought to avoid a statistical bias in favor of SI. Therefore, the minimum participation in a single SI session was deemed sufficient to classify a student as an "SI participant."

Academic achievement for two-year students enrolled in SI courses. Table 1 presents data from two-year institutions across the U.S. Differences were statistically significant in each instance with respect to both percent of unsuccessful enrollments and grade point average in targeted classes. In each instance, the difference favored the group that had participated in the SI program.

The data rarely showed more than a 0.5 grade point difference between SI participants and nonparticipants, and often this turned out to be the difference between low "C" and high "D." Lest the difference be minimized, the low "C" is a grade which permits students to continue in the institution and to graduate, and a high "D" grade, if repeated with sufficient regularity, leads to probation and termination.

The survey of data from 59 two-year public institutions permits separating SI by academic discipline in Table 2. There were clear differences among disciplines, with health sciences and technical/vocational courses showing the highest percentage of honor grades and the lowest percentage of unsatisfactory enrollments. Mathematics showed the opposite with an overall lower percentage of honor grades

Table 1

National SI Field Study Data:
Fiscal Year 1982-83 to 1992-1993 (N = 59 Two-Year Institutions; 480 Courses, 23,979 Students)

Student Grades	SI Participants	Non SI Participants	*p*-value
Final Course Grade*	2.30	1.63	< 0.000
Percent A & B Final Course Grade**	50.58%	32.90%	< 0.007
Percent D, F, W Final Course Grade**	25.90%	46.25%	< 0.000

*Using independent *t*-test **Using chi-square test

and a greater percentage of unsuccessful enrollments.

Interpretation and discussion of results. The pattern of results clearly suggests a close relationship between SI participation and course achievement as measured by final course grades. The exact reasons for the relationship are more elusive. As previously indicated, other research has discounted the effects of competing variables, e.g., previous levels of academic achievement, standardized test scores, high school rank, ethnicity, and motivation level. Thus researchers find no significant difference between the two groups in terms of what they bring to the classroom. In the data presented here, final course grades are used as the evaluation criteria for effectiveness. In four-year institutions, re-enrollment and graduation rates have been used as dependent variables, and differences favored the SI group. With respect to two-year institutions, their special mission and their special constituency make these last mentioned factors of re-enrollment and graduation inappropriate evaluation criteria. Stopping out rather than dropping out, transfer, and non-degree enrollment goals make such evaluations particularly

Table 2

National SI Data: Fiscal Year 1982-1983 to 1992-1993
(N = 59 Two-year Institutions — 480 Courses, 23,979 Students Data Separated by Broad Academic Disciplines)

Course Type		Percent A & B*	Percent D, F, W*	Final Course Grade**
All Courses	SI	50.58%	25.90%	2.30
***N* = 480**	Non-SI	32.90%	46.25%	1.63
	p-value	<0.000	<0.007	<0.000
Business	SI	51.23%	26.70%	2.27
***N* = 87**	Non-SI	34.02%	47.80%	1.49
	p-value	n.s.	<0.001	<0.000
Health	SI	62.88%	20.56%	2.66
Science	Non-SI	50.79%	27.01%	2.07
***N* = 22**	*p*-value	n.s.	n.s.	<0.023
Mathematics	SI	42.19%	37.57%	1.90
***N* = 82**	Non-SI	32.32%	53.14%	1.30
	p-value	n.s.	<0.001	<0.000
Natural	SI	50.43%	21.47%	2.39
Science	Non-SI	34.99%	38.43%	1.70
***N* = 140**	*p*-value	<0.005	<0.001	<0.000
Social	SI	52.19%	22.36%	2.39
Science/	Non-SI	32.84%	42.31%	1.64
Humanities	*p*-value	<0.001	<0.001	<0.000
***N* = 104**				
Technical/	SI	63.67%	20.81%	2.53
Vocational	Non-SI	41.10%	43.44%	1.78
***N* = 27**	*p*-value	n.s.	n.s.	<0.001

*Using chi-square test **Using independent *t*-test
n.s. = "not statistically significant"

inappropriate. And so, statistically speaking, two-year schools must be evaluated appropriately and therefore differently from four-year schools.

While success varies among SI programs, there are no data that would suggest that SI has any major limitations. However, SI is more difficult in content areas where prerequisite skills are a key variable. For example, if students do not remember any algebra, they will have a particularly difficult time in chemistry. SI may be and is effective in these areas; it simply takes more time in planning by the SI leader and more time on task by the students. The clearest evidence of SI failure was in a college where SI was attached to remedial classes. Students refused to attend, and the course was not considered demanding or high risk by students. For maximum effect of SI, adopting institutions should choose courses that are considered by students and faculty to be historically difficult.

Factor Four: Incongruence

Incongruence is the most amorphous of Tinto's (1993) factors and is rooted in student's dual perceptions, first of needs and second of the social and intellectual fabric of institutional life. The student's perception of that fabric is based on his or her experience and likely is limited, biased, or both. In this spirit, the proponents of SI argue that by providing students with peer (or near-peer) mentors beyond faculty and staff mentors, SI assures a broader view of the institution. Similarly, meeting and working with seemingly random collections of peers in collaborative learning situations lends breadth to the student's contact with the institution.

Factor Five: Serendipity

Retrospective analysis of the benefits of SI to the two-year college suggests that there are three unexpected salutary effects that go beyond factors previously mentioned: the student leadership and career development opportunities offered to the SI leaders, the faculty development opportunities that are the consequence of adoption of SI, and the cost effectiveness of the model.

Student Leadership and Career Development

Benefits for SI participants aside, SI offers tangible benefits for the SI leader. During the annual telephone interviews with program directors, Victoria Anderson, Director of the Learning Assistance Center at Highland Community College in Freeport, IL, reported that many of her SI leaders are using SI as a preteaching experience. The SI leader role allows the students to spend time with instructors. Anderson believes that the instructors of SI-targeted courses influence several students each year to consider teaching careers. Anderson has not had difficulty in recruiting candidates for SI leader positions.

Jenni Wallace, of West Surrey College of Art and Design near London, England reported that the job market is sufficiently tight that any portion of a job applicant's resume entry that differentiates among top graduates may be beneficial. SI leaders, therefore, appear to earn quicker entry into professional fields upon graduation.

SI leaders at the University of Missouri-Kansas City find ready admission to graduate study, in part because of their SI experience which faculty correctly perceive as preparation for graduate teaching assistantships.

SI leaders appear to gain valuable experience in listening, group facilitation, consensus building, public speaking, and problem solving. Further, SI leaders regularly report that they understand their discipline better after serving as group leaders.

Faculty Development

Active since 1986, the SI program at Anne Arundel Community College in Arnold, MD is guided by Dr. Rosemary Wolfe, Chair of the Education Department. Wolfe reports that faculty have several options to earn promotion credit for increased salary. Some are approved to earn "professional development credit" through service as SI supervisors (Wolfe, 1990).

An important feature of this activity is that the faculty members supervise SI leaders in areas outside their content specialty. As SI supervisors, they attend classes and SI sessions with student

SI leaders for the first four weeks of the term. As students in a class that is outside their discipline, these faculty mentors have the opportunity to observe and learn different approaches and teaching techniques. They may also become a nonthreatening resource to the class instructor for integrating study skills into course lectures, readings, and assignments as well as providing helpful feedback upon request. It is important to note, however, that the mentors focus on general learning skills, and not on critiquing the content of the class or the instructor's teaching practices.

Changes by class instructors have been noted and reported in a telephone interview by Marina England, campus SI supervisor at Lincoln Land Community College in Springfield, IL. After several science faculty members observed the work of SI in other classes, they decided to make several changes. Although their classes were not designated as "historically difficult," they organized their students into work teams that met outside class. The faculty members regularly visited the student-led study groups to observe and provide assistance.

Jean Jubelirer, campus SI director from Milwaukee Area Technical College (WI), responding to the telephone survey, said that SI helps to form learning communities composed of the SI leader, participating students, and the classroom instructor. Beyond quantifiable results of increased course grades and persistence, faculty members often voiced their appreciation for both the invited feedback offered by SI leaders and their direct support of the learning process.

In an effort to reward SI leaders and to provide an added incentive for their participation, Dr. Deborah Craig-Claar, Associate Dean of Instruction, worked with the financial aid advisor to obtain partial fee waivers for the leaders. Dr. Craig-Claar reported that a key to the success of their SI program has been the flexibility of scheduling the SI sessions when students want to attend (Craig-Claar, 1994).

Faculty engaged in SI become involved in facilitating a process of collaborative learning, an important approach because it helps students learn to empower themselves rather than remain dependent as they might in traditional tutoring. Research suggests that individual tutoring, which most faculty regard as effective, does not always promote transfer of needed academic skills (Blanc et al., 1983; Dimon, 1988; Keimig, 1983; Martin, 1977; Martin & Arendale, 1993; Maxwell, 1990).

Cost Effectiveness

SI is a cost-effective program both in comparison with one-to-one tutoring programs and in increasing student persistence/graduation rates (Martin & Arendale, 1993). The SI program at Sinclair Community College in Dayton, OH has compared the cost effectiveness of SI and individual tutoring since 1991. In a telephone interview, Anna Mays, Director of Educational Support Services and the campus SI supervisor, reported the cost effectiveness of the SI program was critical in winning administrative support. Although cost effectiveness is not easily assessed, the administration of the University of Missouri-Kansas City has undertaken such a study and is satisfied that the SI program returns to the University $1.50 in revenue from retained students for every $1 expended for the support service, with the inclusion of all program costs including administrative oversight.

Conclusion

In 1983, the Department of Education certified SI as a model retention program that the Department recommended for replication. Underlying that decision were data that demonstrated to the satisfaction of the panel that SI was successful in retaining students and could be transported to other venues where similar success might ensue. A decade of data collection has demonstrated the correctness of the panel's decision. Although much attention has focused on the effectiveness of SI in the four-year tertiary institutions, careful analysis of data suggests that the model has been similarly effective in the two-year tertiary institutions.

The reasons for the effectiveness of SI remain somewhat elusive. Performance data support the inference that SI contributes to higher levels of student achievement and, therefore, to increased rates of persistence. Faculty observations assert that SI enables student success while permitting faculty to retain the integrity of their courses.

Both subjective evaluation by SI supervisors and anecdotal evidence from participants bolster claims that SI counters the isolation that leads to a substantial number of voluntary withdrawals from tertiary institutions. A specific goal of SI programs, although not readily quantifiable, is the reduction of the level of perceived incongruence between institutions and individuals. Effective mentorship, a key component of the SI program, offers the means by which to correct the flawed perceptions of students who incorrectly assess the nature of the institution. To this extent, SI stands in the mainstream of curricular responses to Tinto and other researchers who study the problem of inappropriate student departure from the two-year tertiary institutions.

Further support for the SI program derives from what has been called the unintended, salutary side effects of the adoption of the model. Across a broad field, practitioners have noted that SI contributes significantly to the career awareness and professional development of SI leaders. Institutional leaders have noted the faculty development aspect of the SI program. And, in a time of scarce economic resources, the cost effectiveness of the SI model emerges as a strong argument for its implementation.

In recent years, with heightened institutional awareness of the transitional risks that endanger first-year students in tertiary education, Tinto's (1993) research has guided many successful retention efforts. Similarly, The Freshman Year Experience offers a multifaceted approach in the milieu of declining pools of potential students. Once the tertiary institutions have exhausted the declining clientele, they need to look to retain rather than to replace students who might depart the institution. SI offers a strong component to the choice of strategies the institutions may bring to bear on the problem.

References

Astin, A. W. (1993). *What matters in college? Four critical years revisited*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Barefoot, B. (1992). *Helping first-year students climb the academic ladder: Report of a national survey on freshman seminar programming in American higher education*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA.

Blanc, R. A., DeBuhr, L., & Martin, D. C. (1983). Breaking the attrition cycle: The effects of supplemental instruction on undergraduate performance and attrition. *Journal of Higher Education, 54*(1), 80-89.

Craig-Claar, D. (1994, Summer). Starting SI at Maple Woods Community College. *SI News*, 1-2.

Dimon, M. (1988). Why adjunct courses work. *Journal of College Reading and Learning, 21*, 33-40.

Fidler, P., & Fidler, D. S. (1991). *First national survey on freshman seminar programs: Findings, conclusions, and recommendations* (Monograph No. 6). Columbia, SC: National Resource Center for The Freshman Year Experience, University of South Carolina.

Keimig, R. T. (1983). *Raising academic standards: A guide to learning improvement*. (Report No. 4). Washington, DC: Association for the Study of Higher Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 233 669)

Kenney, P. A. (1989). Effects of Supplemental Instruction on student performance in a college-level mathematics course. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Texas-Austin, 1989). *Dissertation abstracts for social sciences, 50*, DA 8909688.

Kenney, P. A. (1990, April). *Effect of Supplemental Instruction on student performance in a college-level mathematics course: A report of additional results*. Paper presented at the American Education Research Association Conference, Boston, MA.

Martin, D. C. (1977). *The learning center: A comprehensive model for college and universities*. Kansas City, MO: University of Missouri, ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 162 294)

Martin, D. C., & Arendale, D. R. (1993). *Supplemental instruction: Improving first-year student success in high-risk courses* (2nd ed.). (Monograph No. 7). Columbia, SC: National

Resource Center for The Freshman Year Experience, University of South Carolina.

Maxwell, M. (1990). Does tutoring help? A look at the literature. *Review of Research in Developmental Education, 7*(4), 1-5.

Shlipak, A. M. (1988). *Engineering and physics as cultural systems: Impressions of science students at Harvard/Radcliffe.* Unpublished bachelor's thesis, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.

Somers, R. L. (1988). *Causes of marginal performance by developmental students.* Boone, NC: National Center for Developmental Education, Appalachian State University.

Stahl, N. A., Simpson, M. L., & Hayes, C. G. (1992, Fall). Ten recommendations from research for teaching high-risk college students. *Journal of Developmental Education, 16*(1), 2-4, 6, 8, 10.

Tinto, V. (1993). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition.* (2nd ed.). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Tobias, S. (1992, May/June). Science education reform: What's wrong with the process? *Change, 24*(3), 13-19.

Upcraft, M. L., & Gardner, J. N. (1989). *The freshman year experience: Helping students survive and succeed in college.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Wolfe, R. F. (1990, Spring/Summer). Professional development through peer interaction. *The Journal of Professional Studies, 14*(1), 50-57.

Chapter 15

Learning Communities and Student Involvement in the Community College: Creating Environments of Inclusion and Success*

Vincent Tinto, Patricia E. Russo, & Stephanie Kadel-Taras

Introduction

We know that the more students are involved in college, the more they gain from the college experience and the more likely they are to stay enrolled (Astin, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Tinto, 1987). Though involvement is important through the college years, nowhere is it more critical than the first year of college, for during the first year the great bulk of attrition from community college arises. Unfortunately, community colleges face myriad obstacles in ensuring that new students get involved. Most community college students commute and are older and generally poorer than four-year college students. Also, unlike the so-called "involving colleges" (Kuh, Schuh, & Whitt, 1991) where students in residential settings devote most of their time to the life of the college, students in community colleges are often pulled by a number of outside obligations including careers and families. For them, going to college is but one of many tasks to be completed during the course of a day. And while many four-year college students have a range of opportunities to meet and interact with faculty and each other, most community college students' interaction with the college is limited to the classroom. If involvement is to occur for these students, it must first occur in the classroom.

For this reason, an increasing number of community colleges have turned to innovations in college teaching and curriculum to enhance students' academic experiences and actively involve them in classroom learning. Two of these innovations, namely the use of collaborative learning strategies and the construction of learning communities for beginning students, are the focus of this chapter. Such collaborative practices seek to improve what goes on in, and between, *classrooms* and among *students and faculty*. Rather than focus on student behaviors and student obligations alone, collaborative learning forces educators to think about the nature of student learning and the character of their own obligations to construct the sorts of educational settings in which all students — not just some — will want to become involved (Tinto, 1993).

In this chapter, we begin by briefly describing the general instructional approach of collaborative learning and its benefits for students and teachers. Next, we define and discuss learning communities as a particular form of collaborative learning. We then look at one learning community program in an urban community college which has been shown to improve freshman students' learning experiences, involve them more

Note: Parts of this chapter are drawn from an earlier article by the same authors published in Community College Journal (1994).

in the academic and social life of the classroom and campus, and increase their rates of persistence.

Collaborative Learning

Smith and MacGregor (1992) discuss collaborative learning as "approaches involving joint intellectual effort" which "center on the students' exploration or application of the course material, not simply the teacher's presentation or explication of it" (p. 10). Joint intellectual effort may be seen when, for example, students break into small groups to analyze a reading assignment or case study, a whole class offers feedback to a student on her class presentation, or a teacher and students work together on a research project. Role playing, team tests, peer critique on written assignments, and group presentations are all examples of collaborative practices in the classroom. Students may work in groups for one class period or in permanent teams for the whole term. They are encouraged to draw on their own diverse experiences to make sense of new material in a shared endeavor. They may be asked to "create a clearly delineated product," or "to participate in a process, an exercise of responding to each other's work or engaging in analysis and meaning making" (Smith & MacGregor, 1992, p. 12).

Of course, the instructor is not absent in this process. The instructor acts as a guide and resource by creating an environment in which students feel safe to speak and participate, by providing the readings and activities for constructing new knowledge, by offering feedback to clarify issues, by helping students see what they have accomplished, and by directing the class toward future tasks. Bruffee (1992) talks about knowledge as created by a community of peers. With this approach, the traditional authority of the teacher as dispenser of knowledge is clearly called into question, but Bruffee (1992) points out that we still need teachers "as conservators and agents of change, as custodians of prevailing community values and as agents of social transition and reacculturation" (p. 32).

When students and professors engage with knowledge in a collaborative way, thinking becomes more complex, different ideas are respected, and students from diverse backgrounds find connections with each other and with faculty in ways that are different from those experienced in more traditional learning environments (Gamson, 1994; Matthews, 1986). At the same time, the instructor and the students are led to rethink their roles in the classroom. Unlike the more traditional view of teaching which sees faculty "fixed in the center of their classroom, supporting the entire burden of responsibility for the course on their own shoulders" (Finkel & Monk, 1992, p. 58), collaborative learning requires the functions of teaching to be distributed among the teacher and students so that everyone in the class takes some responsibility for the course and the learning. In doing so, collaborative learning turns the classroom from a group of students with one instructor into a community of learners who share the responsibility for learning within the classroom.

Learning Communities

Although any classroom in which students and teachers work collaboratively may be considered a "learning community," this term has a specific meaning for educators in the collaborative learning movement. As defined by Gabelnick, MacGregor, Matthews, and Smith (1990), learning communities "purposefully restructure the curriculum to link together courses or course work so that students find greater coherence in what they are learning as well as increased intellectual interaction with faculty and fellow students" (p. 5). Examples of learning communities include linked courses, such as connecting a composition course with an introductory science or humanities course, or learning clusters, which allow the same group of students to take all their classes together and seek connections among courses with the various faculty. Faculty collaboration in learning communities may range from very little knowledge of what each other is doing to team-teaching on a daily basis. Collaborative learning practices, such as small-group workshops and peer writing, are often central features of the intellectual process in such learning communities.

The purposes of learning communities for students are both academic and social. First, by helping students make connections among subject matter, learning communities avoid the fragmen-

tation in the curriculum that is typical of the first two years of undergraduate education. Learning becomes more meaningful for students when they may see how issues and information relate across disciplines. Second, when students work together in more than one class and learn from one another, they may build relationships which overcome the isolation they might otherwise feel, especially if they commute to school. Close relationships with the faculty may also develop when students and instructors spend most of their teaching and learning time together during a term.

Learning communities and collaborative learning are not strangers to community colleges. In the state of Washington, in particular, they have been successfully used to enhance students' social and academic lives (Smith, 1993). To learn more about how learning communities are experienced by beginning college students in community colleges, we recently completed a study of one such program: the Coordinated Studies Program at Seattle Central Community College. We observed in classrooms; interviewed students, faculty, and staff involved in the programs; surveyed several hundred students (within and without the learning communities) at the beginning and end of their first year of college; and analyzed student records for evidence of academic performance and persistence. What we found demonstrates that, despite the many obstacles, community colleges can successfully involve students in education, thus enhancing their learning and increasing their persistence (Russo, 1994; Tinto & Russo, 1993; Tinto, Goodsell Love, & Russo, 1994).

Coordinated Studies Programs at Seattle Central Community College

Seattle Central first offered Coordinated Studies Programs (CSPs) in the fall quarter of 1984. Since then, several CSPs have been offered each quarter within the Humanities Division of the Transfer/Liberal Studies area. Faculty involvement has been widespread. During the 1991-92 school year of our study, nearly all full-time staff and several part-time staff in Humanities had taught in a CSP.

Coordinated Studies Programs are typically team taught by two to four instructors. The themes of the CSPs, defined by their titles (e.g., "Ways of Knowing" or "Of Body and Mind") cross disciplinary areas usually in the Humanities Division, but may extend to the Math-Science or Professional-Technical Divisions. During a quarter, CSPs meet for a total of 11 to 18 hours each week in four- to six-hour blocks over two to four days. Generally all instructors are present and active in all class meetings.

Students who choose to register for a CSP enroll for 11 to 18 credit hours, depending on the CSP, as if they were taking separate courses, but they attend the CSP as one course. For most of the week, the entire class of 40 to 100 students meets as a whole. Once or twice a week the large class breaks down into smaller seminar sessions. For example, in "Our Ways of Knowing: The African American Experience and Social Change," students enrolled for 18 credits within sociology, art, political science, and English. They attended class Monday through Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. On Wednesdays from noon to 1:30 the class broke up into seminars with each of the four instructors meeting with about 20 to 25 students.

CSP course activities include lectures, guest speakers, films, small-group activities in class, small-group and whole-class discussions, seminar sessions, and field trips. Course assignments include regular readings, papers, group projects or presentations, some art projects, a midterm self-evaluation, a final self-evaluation, and, in a few CSPs, quizzes or exams. Given this description of activities and assignments, CSPs do not appear to be very different from traditional academic classes, and in many cases they are not. However, the key differences of cross-disciplinary topics, team teaching, continuous class meeting times, and regular small group activities create a collaborative learning program that provides students a distinctly different learning experience.

Benefits of Learning Communities for Students

How does the experience of participating in a learning community affect students' behaviors, perceptions of themselves and others, and views

of learning? Our research revealed a number of positive effects.

Observations of and interviews with CSP students revealed that they appreciated the contrasting, though complementary, ideas from different instructors on similar course topics. They saw instructors from different disciplines grapple with and analyze information in order to synthesize it with other course content into one main theme. The continuity of course content and class activities helped students engage in their own thinking about issues across disciplines while it reduced the confusion of competing expectations that students usually experience with multiple courses. At the same time, the design of the courses allowed time for in-depth exploration of key concepts and connections of course material to students' life experiences. Class time was characterized by high levels of student participation in thoughtful, complex discussions.

The multi-disciplinary approach also provided a model of learning that encouraged students to express the diversity of their experiences and world views. In doing so, it allowed differences in age, ethnicity, and life experience to emerge and become part of the course. Students appreciated the diverse perspectives shared in the classroom and became more comfortable expressing their own ideas and questions. Many students at Seattle Central commented on the range of diversity as something more than just learning *about each other*. They saw student and faculty diversity as an important factor in their learning *about the course content*.

Student involvement was further enhanced by an increasing amount of social, emotional, and academic peer support that emerged from classroom activities. Through seminars, group projects, and class discussions, the CSPs allowed — indeed compelled — students to participate together actively in their learning both in and out of class. These activities contributed not only to a high level of student participation in learning (as compared to students in traditional class settings), but also to the development of supportive peer groups that extended beyond the boundaries of the classroom. Such peer support clearly helped students balance the many struggles they face in attending college. Networks of established friendships often extended into subsequent academic quarters as students took classes together and/or formed study groups. Thus, while a multi-disciplinary perspective provided a model for the expression of diverse ideas from both the faculty and students and highlighted differences among class participants, the structure and continuity of activities encouraged a "togetherness" that allowed the emergence of a supportive community of peers.

In addition to the above benefits, we found that the innovative approach of the CSP encouraged students to consciously address issues of their own learning. As is common for collaborative learning programs, the CSPs challenged students' assumptions about their roles as learners and about how knowledge is constructed (Gabelnick et al., 1990). The process of collaboration between students and faculty in struggling with the course content encouraged students to embrace an expanded picture of the learning process. They reported that they learned concepts better which were presented from perspectives that crossed content areas, and they expressed a deeper appreciation for the many ways in which knowledge is created; as one student said, "These classes incorporate into your life and into your learning. [The instruction] becomes part of your thinking. It just keeps connecting, and connecting, and connecting."

In interviews and informal conversations, students spoke of the CSPs as involving, supportive, and educationally challenging. They saw themselves engaged in a supportive environment in which their participation was valued. Student responses to survey questions suggest that these positive perceptions of the CSPs carried over into perceptions of the college environment. Without exception, CSP students held significantly more positive views of the college, its students and faculty, its administrators, its classes and climate, and their own involvement as learners there than did other first-year students.

Student views of their learning experiences were mirrored by their behaviors. When compared with similar beginning students in non-learning

community classrooms, students in the learning communities reported being more involved in course-related activities (including writing) and in activities with other students, more connected with faculty, more experienced with the use of library resources, and more involved in arts activities on campus. Quite simply, CSP students reported being significantly more involved than non-CSP students in a range of learning activities. As important, their greater involvement in the classroom extended into other domains of institutional life. Involvement in the classroom became the vehicle through which greater involvement generally arose.

Given the above descriptions of student behaviors and views, it should not be surprising that students in the CSPs saw themselves as having made greater intellectual gains over the course of the year than did their non-CSP peers on a range of subjects and thinking skills. Just as importantly, they were much more likely to continue at Seattle Central in the following quarters than similar students in regular classes. Indeed, the persistence rate into the following fall quarter of students who participated in the CSPs was nearly fifteen percent greater than it was for similar students enrolled in regular classes (66.7% and 52.0% respectively). This is a striking result for a program that lasted but one quarter.

CSP students often spoke specifically of their desire to continue college as a direct result of their CSP experience. Interestingly, this led a number of students with whom we spoke to leave the college in order to transfer to the nearby university. Though they appear in registration records as not persisting at the community college, they obviously may not be considered failures. The learning experiences made possible at Seattle Central through the CSP prompted them to pursue a four-year degree — an endeavor they may not have otherwise thought achievable.

Lest it appear that the kinds of students who take CSPs are the ones who are most likely to stay in college and/or transfer to other institutions — that is, that the observed effects of the program are merely the reflection of the attributes of those who volunteer to join the program — we compared the behaviors, perceptions, and persistence of students who enrolled early in the CSPs (i.e., those who "volunteered" for the program) with those who enrolled at the last moment when all other courses were filled. The findings were identical. The positive effects of the CSP experience — including persistence — were evident whether the student intentionally enrolled in a CSP or registered for it as a last resort.

Implications for Community Membership and Educational Citizenship

Our research lends support to some of the basic tenets of collaborative learning. First, participation in a collaborative learning group enables students to develop a supportive community of peers that helps bond students to the broader social life of the college while also engaging them more fully in the academic experience. Groups that formed for course-related purposes often extended beyond the classroom for informal gatherings and study sessions. In this manner, collaborative learning practices enabled new college students to bridge the academic-social divide that typically confronts students in community colleges; students were able to meet two needs, social and academic, without having to sacrifice one in order to meet the other.

Second, students were influenced by participating in a setting in which sources of learning came from a variety of perspectives beyond that of one faculty member. When several professors were brought together to teach collaboratively, students' learning experiences took on an intellectual richness that traditional courses could not match. At the same time, as students connected their personal experiences to class content and recognized the diversity of views and experiences that marked differing members of the classroom, the academic conversation was opened to many voices, empowering students and validating their ability to contribute to the progress of the course.

Third, student learning was clearly affected by the collaborative experience. Students in those settings were more socially and academically involved in college life and more positive in

their views of the institution and their own involvement in college. We know from student comments that they perceived an improved quality of learning in the collaborative settings and saw themselves as having made greater intellectual gains while in college than did students in regular classes. And perhaps most important, independent of individual attributes, students were more likely to stay in school. While reaffirming the fact that involvement matters, this study highlights at least one way that involvement may be fostered by altering the settings in which students are asked to learn.

When the benefits of learning communities — supportive relationships among peers, respect for diverse perspectives, and a sense of commitment to learning — are taken as a whole, such instructional approaches may have an additional advantage: educational citizenship. During the course of our interviews some students spoke of coming to a deeper appreciation of the manner in which their learning and that of their peers are interwoven, that their rights as learners and their responsibilities as members of a learning community were necessarily linked. This notion of the importance of one's responsibility to the welfare of the larger community of learners, or what we refer to as the concept of educational citizenship, is only one or two steps removed from the concept of citizenship more broadly understood. This suggests the intriguing possibility that one of the outcomes of participating in a learning community is the acquisition of educational norms which are the precursor to the norms of citizenship. This, in turn, leads us to wonder whether such learning experiences may represent one answer to the question underlying the growing movement toward national service, namely how is it that we may attract more young people to seriously consider service as a necessary part of their adult lives? The answer suggested here is that we must move beyond homilies about the need for service to the construction of educational settings whose structure and pedagogy produce the norms we seek.

Reforming the College Community

Meeting the obligation of involving our students through improved academic experiences is no small proposition. Seattle Central Community College required almost a decade to design and integrate effective CSPs into the regular curriculum. Implementing a learning community program that combines courses and links faculty is not only time-consuming but also replete with challenges to the "traditional" ways of doing things. For example, faculty must be assured the time to collaborate with one another and to redesign their courses. Registration procedures, academic advising, and evaluation practices will probably all need revisions. Even if a college seeks to enhance student involvement only through improvements in individual courses — in lieu of multidisciplinary, team-teaching programs — faculty may need professional development workshops on using collaborative and cooperative teaching strategies that encourage diverse student views and the social construction of knowledge.

In addition to implementation issues at the curricular and course level, the obligation to involve students in their learning should lead us to rethink the patterns of academic organization in place at our institutions. Rather than adhere to highly bureaucratic models that emphasize subject and discipline divisions, individual learning in competitive educational settings, and the separation of "student affairs" from "academic affairs," we would be wise to consider adopting a community-based model of education that encourages learning through collaboration and ties together all facets of students' college experiences. Such a model of learning has long been employed with considerable success in smaller, typically private, residential colleges. We are discovering that it may also be successfully adapted to institutional settings where involvement is more difficult to achieve, and that should come as no surprise. What is surprising is that it is has taken us so long to rediscover the importance of community in college and its impact upon student education.

References

Astin, A. (1993). *What matters in college? Four critical years revisited*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Bruffee, K. A. (1992). Collaborative learning and the "conversation of mankind." In A.

S. Goodsell, M. H. Maher, V. Tinto, B. L. Smith, & J. MacGregor (Eds.), *Collaborative learning: A sourcebook for higher education* (pp. 23-33). University Park, PA: National Center on Postsecondary Teaching, Learning, and Assessment, The Pennsylvania State University.

Finkel, D. L., & Monk, G. S. (1992). Teachers and learning groups: Dissolution of the Atlas complex. In A. S. Goodsell, M. H. Maher, V. Tinto, B. L. Smith, & J. MacGregor (Eds.), *Collaborative learning: A sourcebook for higher education* (pp. 50-58). University Park, PA: National Center on Postsecondary Teaching, Learning, and Assessment, The Pennsylvania State University.

Gabelnick, F., MacGregor, J., Matthews, R., & Smith, B. L. (1990). *Learning communities: Creating connections among students, faculty, and disciplines*. New Directions for Teaching and Learning, No. 41. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Gamson, Z. (1994). Collaborative learning comes of age. In S. Kadel & J. Keehner (Eds.), *Collaborative learning: A sourcebook for higher education Volume II* . University Park, PA: National Center on Postsecondary Teaching, Learning, and Assessment, The Pennsylvania State University.

Kuh, G., Schuh, J., Whitt, E., & Associates. (1991). *Involving colleges*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Matthews, R. (1986, October/November). Learning communities in the community college. *AACJC Journal*, pp. 44-47.

Pascarella, E., & Terenzini, P. (1991). *How college affects students*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Russo, P. (1994). *Struggling for knowledge: Students, collaborative learning and community college*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Syracuse University, NY.

Smith, B. L. (1993). Creating learning communities. *Liberal Education, 79*(4), 32-39.

Smith, B. L., & MacGregor, J. (1992). What is collaborative learning? In A. S. Goodsell, M. H. Maher, V. Tinto, B. L. Smith, & J. MacGregor (Eds.), *Collaborative learning: A sourcebook for higher education* (pp. 9-22). University Park, PA: National Center on Postsecondary Teaching, Learning, and Assessment, The Pennsylvania State University.

Tinto, V. (1987). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Tinto, V. (1993). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition* (2nd ed). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Tinto, V., Goodsell Love, A., & Russo, P. (1994). *Building learning communities for new college students: A summary of research findings of the Collaborative Learning Project*. University Park, PA: National Center on Postsecondary Teaching, Learning, and Assessment, The Pennsylvania State University.

Tinto, V., & Russo, P. (1993). *A study of the Coordinated Studies Program at Seattle Central Community College*. University Park, PA: National Center on Postsecondary Teaching, Learning, and Assessment, The Pennsylvania State University.

Tinto, V., Russo, P., & Kadel, S. (1994). Constructing educational communities: Increasing retention in challenging circumstances. *Community College Journal, 64*(4), 26-30.

Chapter 16

Holding the Line: A Comprehensive Plan for Retention

D. David Conklin

A well-organized, comprehensive student retention plan can greatly assist a community college in fostering the success of new students. A planning document that includes definitive actions that an institution is committed to undertaking to promote student retention serves as an aid in creating the kind of environment that addresses student attrition problems in an efficient, straightforward, and effective way. Institutional leaders may use a retention planning process to involve the entire campus community in identifying and analyzing the needs of new students, and the retention plan can serve as a vehicle to communicate the actions the college will undertake to promote student success and reinforce the commitment of the college to help students develop their full potential.

Mercer County Community College (MCCC) in Trenton, New Jersey undertook a planning process for student retention resulting in a plan of action that enabled the college to increase the percentage of students who reenrolled after their first and second semesters and markedly increased the course completion rates for all students. Each fall MCCC enrolls approximately 9,000 full- and part-time students in credit courses. The student body is diverse: Almost 20% are members of minority groups, over 60% are female, and students range in age from 16 to 80. MCCC offers a broad range of academic programs from funeral service to nursing, from business to engineering, from flight technology to theater arts, and from liberal arts transfer curricula to one-year certificate programs.

The genesis of MCCC's retention plan was a call to action issued by then Chancellor of Higher Education of the State of New Jersey, Dr. T. Edward Hollander. In a memorandum to the New Jersey Board of Higher Education and the presidents of the public colleges in the state, Dr. Hollander cited a report of the Education Commission of the States, *Transforming the State Role in Undergraduate Education* (1986), that identified several challenges to undergraduate education, including the necessity to improve the rates of college completion. The report cited a number of disturbing statistics:

- Only one-half of those students who enroll in college ever graduate.
- Only 30% - 40% of freshmen at four-year colleges graduate within four years.

- In one major public college system, only 16% of community college students receive their associate's degree within four years.

After analyzing comparative retention data from New Jersey's colleges and universities, Dr. Hollander in his memorandum concluded that institutions with large numbers of students from high-risk groups do not fare as well as those with large numbers who come to college with adequate preparation. Attrition rates for a four-year period at New Jersey baccalaureate degree-granting colleges ranged from a low of 30.5% to a high of 61.5%. At community colleges, attrition over five semesters varied from 48% to 88%. Although he was careful to state that these data were not intended as a criticism of the state's public colleges and that New Jersey's attrition levels did not vary substantially from those across the nation, he pointed out that it was the responsibility of each college to renew its efforts to reduce attrition and help students succeed academically.

Believing that a comprehensive institutional approach could effectively improve retention, Dr. Hollander challenged New Jersey's public colleges and universities to analyze their student retention data and develop a plan to improve student retention. He urged that the plan be comprehensive and recognize that a student's persistence is related to the quality of instruction and campus life.

MCCC accepted the Chancellor's challenge to develop a comprehensive retention plan that could be used as a way to focus the college's energy and attention on the need to help students succeed. But the faculty and administrative leadership of MCCC realized that the task of increasing student retention would be not be easy. The development of a retention plan would force the college to examine itself critically and seek ways to improve the services offered to students. What works for one campus may be inappropriate for another, and there are no magic formulas that will increase retention. However, MCCC committed itself to the goal of improving its ability to retain students.

To begin the process of producing a retention plan, the president appointed an *ad hoc* steering committee composed of faculty, administrators, and student support personnel. The committee was chaired by a faculty member who was granted release time of three instructional contact hours, which represented a 20% reduction in his teaching load, to spearhead this effort. The task force was charged with the overall goal of improving programs and services for students. The members were asked to identify current campus retention efforts that were successful and to be creative in recommending new activities that could lead to improved student success.

The college's chief academic officer and chief student services officer were members of the steering committee. They committed themselves and their staffs to working with steering committee members to analyze the college's retention situation and pledged their support in mobilizing a college-wide retention effort. As the process progressed, the value of having these two individuals serve on the steering committee became evident. Not only did their membership signify the college's commitment to mounting a successful retention effort, but the persons holding these positions were the ones most knowledgeable about current student retention activities. However, the overall success of the efforts to produce a comprehensive retention plan and improve student success depended on the support of the entire faculty and professional staff. The steering committee was well aware of this fact and worked diligently to insure broad-based involvement.

The president gave the following charge to the Retention Steering Committee:

- Determine the campus dropout rate.
- Conduct an institutional self-study to identify what current retention practices were successful and where improvement was needed.
- Increase faculty and staff awareness of factors related to student retention.
- Devise a retention plan that includes (a) existing data on student retention, (b) student retention goals for the next three years, (c) actions that are currently used to improve student success, (d) new activities that can

promote student retention, (e) administrative responsibility, and (f) completion dates for all retention activities, and additionally creates a greater awareness on the part of campus personnel that student retention strategies may have a positive impact on student success.

The steering committee began by engaging the faculty and staff in a campus-wide effort to study the issues and problems related to student retention. Faculty and staff reviewed the literature on retention, attended national and regional conferences, participated in college self-studies, and proposed various policies and new or improved procedures to enhance student success. As a result of these efforts, the steering committee identified the following issues as being critical to student success and therefore the central focus of the college's retention efforts:

- Students need to be better prepared for college at the junior and senior high school level, including having a better knowledge of MCCC and its programs.
- Newly admitted students need to be given a comprehensive orientation to the college, its policies, and procedures.
- Students who feel a stronger identification and personal involvement with the college are more likely to succeed.
- Students who perceive more faculty interest, attention, and concern for their success, including help in planning their academic programs and in registering for classes, are more likely to succeed.
- Instructional quality and faculty sensitivity to the different learning styles of students is critical to the effectiveness of the teaching/learning process and to student success.
- Students experiencing academic difficulty need to be identified and provided help as early in each semester as possible; to serve the variety of their difficulties and learning styles, a broad range of academic support programs is needed.
- Students should be encouraged to seek advisement and to register early for the next semester; faculty should be involved in an outreach effort that encourages students to return each semester.
- Financial and physical accessibility should be guaranteed to every student to the greatest extent possible.

The steering committee spent a year completing its work on a Student Retention Plan. During that time, faculty, staff, and students were surveyed to solicit their ideas about how to improve student retention. The steering committee also discussed ways to use the collective wisdom and energy that already existed on the campus to improve retention and build a sense of commitment to the actions contained in the retention plan. The task force was careful to ensure that the Student Retention Plan incorporated techniques that were effective in the past, contained suggestions of the members of the task force about new retention actions, included activities that have been successful in other colleges, and encompassed the recommendations of the faculty and staff.

After widely distributing several drafts for comment, the steering committee issued the final Student Retention Plan. The plan was organized by topical areas, with specific actions to be undertaken listed under each area. Included in the plan was an indication of which college division, department, or unit was responsible for each action, and a completion date was noted. Therefore, the plan was a blueprint for college departments to use to gauge their progress toward completing the actions that the steering committee believed were important to promote student success. The steering committee deliberately included as many actions as possible in the plan, not only to stress its comprehensiveness, but to assist faculty and administrative leaders in making sure that successful retention activities were written down so they could be repeated each semester or year. One of the situations that many of the steering committee had experienced in the past was losing good ideas because they were not recorded.

The Student Retention Plan also included three sections that were considered unusual for a plan

of this type. They were (a) working with high school faculty and students, (b) providing developmental activities for faculty to improve their teaching effectiveness and increase their understanding of the different learning styles of students, and (c) cultural diversity initiatives. The literature on student retention suggests that student success at an open door institution depends to a great extent upon the ability level and academic readiness of the students entering the college. More students from each Mercer County high school's graduating class attended the community college than any other single college or university. Therefore, the steering committee felt strongly that providing opportunities for high school students to come to the campus as often as possible would help them become familiar with the physical environment at the college and remove some of the mystique about and fear of attending college. Also, activities promoting increased interaction between high school and college faculty by academic discipline areas was included in the plan. Particularly with regard to mathematics and English, it was believed that college faculty could help their high school counterparts understand the demands of beginning level college courses so that high school faculty could better prepare their students to be successful in college.

Research on student success stresses the importance of a caring faculty. Students are more likely to stay in college if they are actively learning and believe that someone is concerned about their progress. Therefore, the Student Retention Plan contained a number of activities related to faculty development programs, particularly those that stress teaching effectiveness and understanding the different learning styles of students.

The report prepared by the Education Commission of the States that was referred to in Dr. Hollander's memo on improving student retention noted that completion rates for minority students were declining. The steering committee concluded that there was a need for greater understanding on the part of faculty and staff of the diverse backgrounds of students enrolled at the College. MCCC has a significant minority student population and the steering committee felt that a program on cultural diversity that included students as well as faculty and staff could be beneficial to promoting a better understanding and greater acceptance of people from different backgrounds.

The following is the outline of the Student Retention Plan of Mercer County Community College, along with an edited list of the activities that were included in the plan.

Student Retention Plan

I. Develop and Implement High School Outreach Programs.

A. Increase/improve relationships with area secondary school faculty and students.

1. Distribute a brochure on what courses to take in high school to prepare for college to eighth grade public school students.
2. Continue/expand program of college faculty giving guest lectures to high school classes; develop annual mailing to high school teachers describing the program.
3. Implement outreach workshops and seminars on career exploration and financial aid.
4. Continue program of regular meetings of math and English high school teachers and college faculty.
5. Continue series of lectures for area high school teachers on educational issues.
6. Seek additional articulation agreements with area high schools.

B. Increase awareness of college programs by bringing more area students on campus for various activities.

1. Invite area junior/senior high school classes to attend lectures on campus given by nationally recognized experts.
2. Offer free use of computerized career exploration services to high school students.
3. Host day-long campus visits by minority high school juniors and seniors with guest lecturers, and campus tours.
4. Continue/expand summer enrichment programs for minority high school students.

C. Develop a comprehensive system to provide new students with information about MCCC.

1. Conduct financial aid workshops at high schools and on campus for high school counselors, students, and parents.
2. Expand, evaluate, and improve new student programs held prior to the start of each semester to encourage faculty/staff/student interaction.
3. Continue/improve orientation program for parents/spouses of new students.
4. Develop/improve/distribute new student orientation publications.
5. Develop and offer a freshman orientation course.

II. Enhance Advisement, Registration, Attendance, and Financial Aid Programs.

A. Improve Academic Advisement.

1. Encourage more faculty involvement in the student advisement process.
2. Improve advisement of part-time non-matriculated students and encourage those students to matriculate.
3. Improve tracking of all students' progress.

B. Encourage more students to return and register early.

1. Develop various communications tools to inform students about early registration, including posters, letters, and advertisements.
2. Have faculty encourage students to register early.
3. Use a computer system to identify nonregistered students and contact them in the final week of early registration.

C. Implement improved attendance, progress report policies, and other initiatives for early detection of student academic problems.

1. Urge faculty to implement strict attendance policies.
2. Include student phone numbers on rosters and encourage faculty use for follow-up.
3. Provide attendance postcards for faculty to send to students with attendance problems.
4. Develop and implement academic performance contracts for students on probation and academic warning.
5. Continue use of a computerized "early warning"/alert system for faculty to identify students experiencing academic difficulties and to send notification letter to students.

III. Continue to Implement Academic Support Programs.

A. Continue existing academic skill development programs and develop new resources to strengthen student study skills.

1. Offer academic skills workshops.
2. Develop and distribute study skills publications to new students.

B. Provide a variety of free tutoring services to meet varying student needs.

C. Develop additional transfer articulation agreements with four-year colleges and prepare publications that clearly inform students of their transfer options.

IV. Offer Various Extracurricular Academic and Cultural Activities Designed to Encourage Student Success.

V. Recognize Student Academic and Non-Academic Achievement.

VI. Continue, Enhance, and Develop Student Support Services.

A. Support and Expand Existing Peer Counseling Program.

B. Expand child care services.

C. Seek student input regarding student service/interests.

VII. Continue to Implement Faculty and Staff Development Programs to Enhance Student Retention.

A. Utilize academic convocations to inform both adjunct and full-time faculty of college initiatives, objectives, and policies related to retention.

B. Provide programs and opportunities for faculty to improve teaching skills and remain current in their professional fields.

1. Offer teaching effectiveness workshops to help full-time and adjunct faculty improve teaching skills.
2. Sponsor special presentations by experts on student success and retention.
3. Support faculty attendance and presentations at regional and national meetings on retention.

C. Provide additional opportunities for faculty and staff to explore retention issues.

1. Publish and distribute materials on retention.
2. Sponsor an annual regional conference on retention for two-year college personnel.

VIII. Provide Multicultural Activities for Student, Faculty, and Staff to Enhance Campus Environment and Appreciation of Cultural Diversity.

A. Designate enhanced campus environment and cultural diversity as college-wide objectives.

B. Develop and distribute readings, posters, and other materials to enhance discussion and awareness of cultural diversity issues.

C. Sponsor faculty and staff participation in racial harmony conferences and develop on-campus group training sessions.

D. Sponsor on-campus speakers/presentations on cultural diversity.

IX. Improve Campus Facilities and Accessibility.

A. Provide more quiet study space.

B. Improve/increase access to campus facilities for physically challenged students.

X. Long-Range Goals for Student Persistence and Graduation.

The New Jersey Department of Higher Education selected a number of consultants to review the retention plans submitted by the public colleges and universities. The consultants who reviewed MCCC's retention plan commented that the description of new initiatives was not adequately detailed, and there was no time line provided for implementing the new initiatives. This criticism was considered to be valid, and each administrative or academic department responsible for a new initiative was charged with developing a separate explanation of the initiative along with a detailed action plan for its implementation.

In addition, the consultants stated that additional attention needed to be given to how the activities in the plan were to be evaluated. Evaluation is a critical phase in any successful planning process, and the steering committee members wrestled with how to incorporate an effective evaluation mechanism for each of the activities into the plan. They concluded that it would not be practical for the steering committee to be responsible for the evaluation component of the plan. Therefore, the evaluation of the Student Retention Plan was incorporated into the college's already established strategic planning process. In the strategic plan, academic and administrative departments develop objectives for the year and then report on the attainment of those objectives on a quarterly basis, with an annual report produced each summer. The annual reports are widely distributed, and they are discussed at the annual planning retreat of the executive staff. Although it was redundant to include retention activities in both the Student Retention Plan and a depart-ment's annual objectives, this procedure did provide a workable mechanism to review the progress toward accomplishing specific retention plan activities regularly. Incorporating portions of the Student Retention Plan into the college's strategic planning process also gave additional credibility to the retention efforts.

Finally, the consultants commented on the fact that the programs listed in the Student Retention Plan were not well integrated. Again, this was an issue that the steering committee debated for some time. The final conclusion was that there was no need to cross-reference the activities. The steering committee felt that trying to integrate all of the activities would make the plan more complex than it needed to be. Therefore, the decision was made not to revise the organization of the plan.

After the first edition of the Student Retention Plan was widely distributed on campus in 1990, the members of the steering committee received many favorable comments about the plan. There was a general consensus that the plan was comprehensive, that it had the support of high level administrators, that it incorporated faculty and staff suggestions, and that it provided a workable guide to improve the student success efforts of the college. The students at Mercer County Community College were more successful because of the work of the *ad hoc* steering committee on student retention, and the Student Retention Plan improved the ability of the college to reduce student attrition.

Chapter 17

Visible Leadership: The Role of the Community College President in The Freshman Year Experience

George B. Vaughan

Imagine, for a moment, the following scene:

A college president is walking leisurely across a tree-lined campus. The sun is filtering through leaves, giving the campus a gentle glow. Although the opening of fall semester is a week away, the freshmen are on campus for their orientation to college life. The president stops every few yards, greeting students with a friendly smile, a hello, and an occasional handshake. All the students recognize the president, having met him the evening before at a reception given in honor of their incoming class. Many of the students offer their own greetings, some even commenting on the chances of winning the season's first football game.

Anyone who has had an experience similar to this probably remembers it fondly. Most of us like to think that this is the way students are (or should be) introduced to the college experience. While similar scenes still happen on a few campuses, they rarely, if ever, occur on the public community college campus. And while many community colleges are beautiful and have their share of sunshine (with some even having a tree-lined campus), the most remembered walk for most community college students is usually a mad dash from the parking lot to the classroom building.

For any number of reasons, most community college presidents rarely take the "presidential stroll" that lives on in novels, movies, and memories.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the community college president's role in enhancing the freshman year experience for those individuals entering the community college for the first time. It also offers suggestions for expanding and improving that role.

Certainly the freshman year experience for community college students differs from that of many four-year college students, especially if the four-year students are full-time residential students. Different, however, does not mean less important or, in many cases, less traumatic. For example, the 45-year-old female homemaker whose three children have finally left home, giving her a first taste of "freedom" in years (maybe ever), upon entering college experiences fears and frustrations that most "traditional" college students have not lived long enough to know about. For this homemaker and the millions of community college students coming from similar backgrounds, entering college for the first time is an experience in the most dramatic sense of the word. Moreover, this homemaker is likely taking only one course during

151

her first attempt at college. Her immediate goals are to attend every class, to be on time, and to save enough money to take a class next semester.

Lest the reader be misled — and many people are unaware of the diversity of the students enrolled at a community college — the 45-year-old homemaker, while a common type, is not the typical community college student. A "typical" community college student does not exist. For example, attending the same college, sitting in the same classes with this woman is an 18-year-old first-time student who graduated from the local high school with a "B+" average and who wants a college experience that may not duplicate the four-year experience but certainly contains some of the same elements. The 18-year-old, who may well be a full-time student (although he or she will likely have a part-time job), wants to be involved in campus activities, learn about and practice leadership, and, in general, prepare for the next step in his or her education: transfer to a four-year institution.

The Students and the Setting

Most community college presidents know a great deal about the students attending their institutions. They know, for example, that the average age of the students approaches 30 years, that the great majority of the students attend college part-time and work either full- or part-time, that the evening hours are the most popular time for part-time students to attend class, that a greater percentage of minority students attend the community college than attend any other segment of higher education, that more women attend community colleges than men, and that (in most states) 100% of the students commute to college. Community college presidents know that the community college represents the only opportunity most of the students have for getting a college education. Of course, presidents know a great deal more than facts and figures about the students attending the community college. The important concern, at least from the perspective of this chapter, is how the president may use what is known about community college students and the campus climate and culture to make the transition to college a meaningful educational and personal experience for those individuals entering the community college for the first time.

The demographics and attendance patterns of community college students obviously present for community college presidents some unique challenges and opportunities that do not exist on most four-year campuses. Moreover, the nature of the campus and the president's own schedule present some major challenges for those presidents committed to making the freshman year experience meaningful for students. Most students neither know nor care who the president is unless they have a problem that the president might assist them in solving, so early in the year presidents must present themselves to new students and make themselves visible figures throughout the year. But most community college campuses do not lend themselves to large group gatherings. That is, it is difficult, if not impossible, for presidents to have a forum for addressing large numbers of students, and this lessens the symbolic role of the president.

Added to the complexities of the campus are the president's working patterns. Most community college presidents today spend a great amount of their time off-campus, either with business and political leaders or with other individuals who may help the college obtain additional resources. Presidents tend to do most of their work during the day, thereby being unavailable for most part-time, evening, or weekend students on a regular basis. Although many presidents are sensitive to the need to see and be seen by evening or weekend students, a special effort is required to do so.

Creating the Campus Climate: The President's Role

One of the major functions of the community college president is to create a campus climate in which students, faculty, and staff achieve their potential as teachers and learners and as members of the college community; "The president sets the tone and pace—establishes the campus mood—that other members of the college community can sense, identify with, and emulate" (Vaughan, 1989, p. 10). Simply stated, the president is the person on campus who has the forum, resources, and prestige to

influence significantly the campus climate. The campus climate consists of the impressions that students form as they first encounter the campus. Although these impressions consist of ephemeral snapshots of campus life, they make up the college world for first-time community college students who are beginning their college careers. As such, the climate these students encounter may influence their entire college career, a career that may extend through the doctorate or end with the student dropping out of college in less than one semester. A positive campus climate, then, is essential to a positive experience for first-time students at the community college.

Although leisurely strolls across campus may not be part of the president's daily routine, the community college president nevertheless has the major responsibility for assuring that the campus climate is one in which all students feel welcome and at ease. First-time students who have not participated in formal education for a number of years are especially vulnerable to feelings of frustration and alienation, regardless of the campus climate. Certainly faculty and staff, and, one hopes, other students may help make first-time students feel welcome by being friendly and helpful, making them feel that their community college is a good place to be. Just as importantly, the policies and procedures at the college should be "user friendly." While a smile from a faculty or staff member may go a long way in making a new student feel welcome, it may not get the student through a complex, frustrating registration process; nor is a smile a substitute for an efficient process for obtaining financial aid or for effective academic advising. The campus climate, then, must be one that exudes competence as well as warmth.

The president, along with vice-presidents, deans, faculty, and staff, must work toward creating a climate on campus that fosters teaching and learning. The president also must "test" the climate in any number of ways to determine how well the campus is serving students and to ensure that it conveys both warmth and competence. Presidents may visit with students in the student union, observe the registration process, visit a parking lot during rush hour, chat informally with first-time students, address small groups of students, shake hands, and engage in any number of other activities, some of which will be explored in more detail later in this discussion, to determine if the climate is one that makes students feel welcome and valuable to themselves and to the college.

Climate to Culture

In contrast to the ephemeral and sometimes volatile nature of the campus climate, campus culture is more permanent and less subject to individual attitudes and actions. In contrast to campus climate, campus culture changes slowly. Culture grows out of past and present actions and results in shared values, beliefs, and assumptions about the college's role. The culture of the institution influences the perceptions that students and others have of the college:

> The effective leader understands and is sensitive to the culture of an institution. The leader respects and preserves the good things of the past but always leads in shaping the present and planning for the future. The effective leader, and especially the president, understands when and where to try to change an institution's culture and when to let go of past values that are no longer acceptable in society or as a part of the institutional mission .... The president absorbs and is absorbed by the institutional culture and ultimately becomes an integral part of the culture, often after passing from the scene. (Vaughan, 1992, p. 22.)

First-time students, while vitally interested in an effective registration process and other aspects of the campus climate, are also influenced by the campus culture. The culture of the community college has many similarities to the culture of most colleges. Nevertheless, it also is quite different in many respects. First, and perhaps most importantly, student diversity means that students take many different course loads over four years to finish a two-year degree, and their class attendance patterns vary as well. They may attend at night or drop out for a semester or more. Thus, for many *there is no identifiable freshman class* in the sense that students move as a group from

the freshman year to the sophomore year and so on sequentially. This lack of an identifiable freshman class is one reason why community colleges refer to *first-time* students rather than to *freshmen*. For example, the homemaker described above probably would begin her college career by taking only one course a semester. She probably would not be involved in campus activities that extend beyond her course requirements, at least not during her "freshman year." She likely rushes to class and rushes home, at least initially. Simply stated, she may hardly be viewed as someone involved in the freshman experience in the sense that she is drastically changing her lifestyle or even her thinking at this point in her life. The same may be said for the shipyard worker who has just lost his job and is taking a course in mathematics in order to prepare for another job. The list of examples similar to these is literally limitless.

Entering into this same mix are young, full-time students similar to the 18-year-old man described above. Their goal simply is to get enough credits to transfer to a four-year college or university. Obtaining the associate's degree is often unimportant to them unless it is required in order to transfer. They do, however, want a college experience, including becoming involved in activities that extend well beyond the classroom. They resemble the students that William Neumann and David Riesman refer to as the community college elite, although the authors were referring to students who transfer to independent four-year colleges and universities, rather than to public as well as independent ones (Neumann & Riesman, 1980). The community college elite in the Neumann and Riesman study generally had a very positive experience in their first semester at the community college, often attending full-time while working part-time. "Not only were they studying and working at their community colleges, but increasingly the college environment became part of their social life. A number of the community college elite became involved in campus politics and student government. They were likely candidates because they were good students and already spent a good deal of time at the college" (Neumann & Riesman, 1980, p. 58).

With such a diverse group of students — homemakers resuming their educations, workers training for reemployment, and traditional college freshmen, to name a few subgroups — creating a common culture requires both leadership and sensitivity on the part of the president and other campus leaders. The president of the college must work to shape and extend that culture in ways that enhance both the learning and social experiences of first-time students. To do so, the president first must understand and appreciate the college's culture. The president must also know how to modify the culture, preserving what is good while constantly reshaping it to meet the needs of an ever-changing group of students. And the president must work with others to sustain a climate and culture that is reassuring to all first-time students as they embark upon their college careers.

Activities and Actions

The community college president may take a number of avenues and approaches to enhance the freshman year experience for first-time community college students. Although most presidents are involved in the general orientation sessions for students, they rarely view the sessions in relation to the larger picture of climate and culture. The following examples may differ in degree (but not necessarily in kind) from activities community colleges engage in to make first-time students feel welcome. Nevertheless, they serve to illustrate how presidents and other campus leaders may use the orientation sessions for new students to enhance the climate and extend the culture of the college.

Robert G. Templin, Jr., President of Thomas Nelson Community College in Virginia spends a day during the fall orientation period with a group of students consisting of second-year student leaders and new students who indicated on their SAT or ACT forms that they were interested in learning more about leadership while in college. The president's role is threefold: to let new students know that he is interested in them as individuals, to show commitment to promoting student leadership, and to identify a nucleus of student leaders who will participate in the college's governance. Much like the community college elite discussed above, these students want a college experience that emphasizes leadership development and involvement in college activi-

ties that go well beyond the classroom. The president, over the years, has created a culture that extends the freshman year experience of potential student leaders into the future: He draws upon the core of student leaders identified during the "freshman year experience" and appoints students to the various college committees, including the college council which consists of deans, faculty, and staff. "You can't just pick leaders up off the interstate," Templin notes.

The president of Lord Fairfax Community College in Virginia helps establish a positive campus climate for incoming students by greeting them in six orientation sessions each semester (including summer terms) held during both the day and evening, and by attending a number of college-sponsored cookouts for the students and their families. In addition to the usual "pep talk," she uses these sessions to encourage the students to become involved in campus leadership. She writes a letter to each new member of the Phi Theta Kappa, the community college's honor society committed to developing student leaders. Recognizing that she has an important role in establishing the campus climate, the president spends some time working in the registration process, preferring to work the problem table. She asks students these questions: What are they thinking? What are their problems? Why are they taking only six credit hours? What may she, as president, do to make their introduction to college more meaningful?

The president of Kansas City-Kansas Community College places major emphasis on preparing the faculty and staff for their roles in working with first-time students. Major emphasis is placed on interacting with adult students much older than the recent high school graduates attending the college. One important aspect of the program is a number of programs developed for targeted students, such as displaced homemakers, single parents, unemployed males, and others. Brown-bag lunches are held for the targeted groups, with the president addressing them on a regular schedule. The president sets aside hours to meet with students and offers advice to them on alternatives in higher education. One way the president institutionalizes what is learned from the activities for new students is to write them a letter asking them about their experiences during the first semester in college and soliciting suggestions for change. Many of the changes are incorporated into the next year's new student orientation period.

The president of Ashland Community College in Kansas places major emphasis on establishing a culture that helps students to recognize their importance to the college. For example, the deans and president call new students to ask them how they are doing, what problems they face, and what the college may do to make their entry into college a pleasant and meaningful experience. As is true at Kansas City-Kansas Community College, Ashland Community College has designated certain student groups as requiring special attention. A major target group at Ashland consists of those students needing remedial academic and developmental work. In addition, forums are held for new students each academic session, with the president addressing the groups. The president makes clear that the door to the president's office is open to students.

At Blue Ridge Community College in Virginia, one week is devoted to orienting new day and evening students to the college. Student government leaders play important roles in the orientation; they utilize the lessons learned and contacts made to recruit other students into the college leadership corps. During that week, there are free hot dogs for lunch and donuts and coffee for the evening students. The president, who is committed to improving the campus climate, works with the deans and other campus leaders to assure that such seemingly mundane things as parking, food service, the bookstore, and other operations are not fraught with frustrations. If you miss class because you cannot find a parking place, parking is obviously not a mundane problem.

One important activity has clear implications for shaping the culture of the college at Blue Ridge: The college brings together all freshman scholarship recipients and their families in a face-to-face meeting with the scholarship donors. Faculty and staff also attend the meeting during which the president introduces the scholarship recipients and sponsors. Putting faces on donors and recipients humanizes the scholarship process far

beyond what normally happens. It also gives the college and the students an opportunity to build bridges with community leaders that might not otherwise be available. Students often seek jobs with the same organizations and businesses that give scholarships. As Blue Ridge's president notes, the occasion fosters "a continued sense of unity between the public and private sectors."

In addition to the above activities for first-time students, many community colleges send letters from the president and deans welcoming the students to the college, distribute literature about clubs and other organizations, give campus tours, offer orientations sessions on how to study effectively and use the library, hold receptions, and do any number of things one expects to happen in any freshman year experience, no matter what type of institution. The above examples do, however, offer evidence that the campus climate and institutional culture are important in creating a freshman year experience that extends beyond the present. What, then, may one conclude about the president's role in making the freshman year experience meaningful for students new to the community college?

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusion 1. The president's role is ultimately one of educational leader. Educational leadership extends well beyond the formal classroom and community activities. Working with students, faculty, and staff to make the experience for first-time community college students meaningful and pleasant is a prime but underutilized arena for exercising educational leadership at the presidential level.

Recommendation 1. The president should become involved as much as is feasible in making the experience for first-time students a meaningful educational and personal experience. Orientation week for new students is not the time for presidents to take that long-delayed vacation. By being visible for new students, the president helps establish a climate that lets them know they are important to the college and to the president. As suggested in the opening paragraph of this discussion, many students remember their first college experience. Meeting the president may well be an important part of that memory.

Conclusion 2. More so than in any other segment of higher education, the family of the community college student is important in the educational process. Indeed, often the college experience for community college students is a family affair, especially considering that many community college students are the first in their family to attend college. As is true with much about the community college experience, involving the family requires new ways of thinking about the college experience. For example, the family is often a spouse and children and the student is a mother rather than the traditional mother and father dropping off their 18-year-old son or daughter at a college some distance from home. The homemaker previously mentioned above may have had to do a great deal of explaining to her spouse about why she is taking the time and money to attend the community college. Even children, who are themselves involved at some level of education, often fail to understand why "mom" is going to college. On the positive side, and as every president who has ever presided at a community college graduation is aware, spouses, children, grandparents, and grandchildren show up at community college graduations to cheer on the graduate. But for many community college students, getting there is much more difficult than being there.

Recommendation 2. The community college president and other campus leaders should use the freshman year experience to involve the family members of first-time students in the orientation to college process. Blue Ridge Community College, with its scholarship ceremony, is an outstanding example of how family members may share in the college experience; the family picnic at Lord Fairfax Community College is another.

Conclusion 3. While most first-time college students have special needs, certain groups of community college students seem to present especially unique needs that the freshman year experience may help to identify and confront. For example, it is especially important to women who are returning to college after a number of

years as homemakers to have a spouse who understands why they are returning to college, especially if the spouses are threatened by their wives attending college. Older adults whose spouses have returned to college may form a support group during the first semester of their spouse's enrollment, and the college president may address this group on what to expect when a spouse returns to the classroom. This would present the president with an excellent opportunity to exercise an educational leadership role in an area that is virtually untapped. The college would make friends, and the adults returning to college probably would find college attendance a more rewarding experience.

Recommendation 3. College presidents and other campus leaders should identify groups with special needs and establish mechanisms for dealing with those needs. Doing so will enhance the campus climate for the identified groups and will provide the basis for extending the college culture into areas that are vital to the health of the college and its students.

Conclusion 4. The above discussion explores briefly the importance of creating a campus climate and culture that enhances the educational experience for first-time community college students. If the experience is to be a successful one that has long-lasting effects, it must function in a climate that is friendly and helpful to the first-time student and must ultimately become a part of the institutional culture.

Recommendation 4. The president and other campus leaders should be sensitive to the impact of institutional climate and culture on first-time college students. This sensitivity includes monitoring the climate for desirable and less than desirable characteristics and actions, correcting the flaws, and extending the positive aspects. It also implies that students are consulted regularly on what their introduction to college means to them, what is good in the process, and what is lacking. Once an understanding of the climate is achieved, the president, above all others, should seek avenues for inculcating those positive aspects of the freshman year experience into the college's culture in ways that build upon the past and present and may be carried forward into the future.

The above discussion illustrates a number of things the freshman year experience at a community college has in common with the experience at other colleges and universities. More importantly, perhaps, it discusses some of the differences that first-time community college students bring to their educational experience. To make the experience meaningful for its diverse group of students, the effective community college should incorporate some aspects of the traditional freshman year experience into its program. Nevertheless, its leaders should keep in mind that community college students have some special and even unique needs that must be met if their transition into college is to be pleasant and meaningful. No individual on campus is in a better position to see that first-time community college students have the best experience possible than the college president. The challenge is to become involved as the college's educational leader and symbol without becoming involved in managing the process that culminates in the freshman year experience. Becoming an important part of the freshman year experience for first-time community college students offers new challenges for most community college presidents.

References

Neumann, W., & Riesman, D. (1980). The community college elite. In G. Vaughan (Ed.), *Questioning the community college role*, (pp. 53-71). (New Directions for Community Colleges, No. 32). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Vaughan, G. (1989). *Leadership in transition: The community college presidency*. New York: American Council on Education/Macmillan Publishing Co.

Vaughan, G. (1992). Leaders on a tightrope: The risks and tension of community college leadership. In G. B. Vaughan (Ed.), *Dilemmas of leadership: Decision making and ethics in the community college*, (pp. 3-29). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

The Authors

Joseph N. Hankin

Joseph N. Hankin, President of Westchester Community College, in Valhalla, NY, earned his bachelor's degree in social sciences at the City College of New York, a master's in history at Columbia University, and an Ed.D. in Administration of Higher Education at Teacher's College, Columbia University. He holds a second doctorate, *Honoris Causa*, from Mercy College in New York. Hankin taught at the City University of New York from 1962-1965, and has taught as an occasional lecturer, adjunct and associate professor, and ultimately as a full professor at Teacher's College. Hankin began working in college administration in 1965. Following a one-and-a-half year period as Director and then Dean of Continuing Education and the summer sessions at Harford Junior College in Bel Air, MD, the Harford Board of Trustees requested Hankin, then 26 years old, to assume the college presidency, an office he held for four-and-a-half years. In 1971, he became the second president of Westchester Community College.

Hankin has served as the Vice Chair of the Board of Directors of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, President and Vice President the Junior College Council of Middle Atlantic States, and President of the Eastern Education Consortium. He is certified as a Large Complex Case Program Arbitrator by the American Arbitration Association.

Hankin has received a New York State Regents Scholarship, a Kellogg Fellowship in Community College Administration, honorary election to Chi Sigma Mu and to Phi Delta Kappa. In 1994 he was honored by the Child Care Council of Westchester, Inc., for his nearly 20 year commitment to early childhood education. In 1986, he was chosen by his peers as one of the hundred most effective presidents of two- and four-year colleges and universities in the country. In 1988, he was identified as one of 51 "transformational leaders" in two-year colleges across the nation. Hankin is listed in the *Dictionary of International Biography*, and *Who's Who in America*.

David R. Arendale serves as Director of the Center for Supplemental Instruction housed at the University of Missouri - Kansas City. In this capacity he conducts training workshops for institutions desiring to implement Supplemental Instruction programs. Arendale also serves as Associate Director of the Center for Developmental Education. He is currently the President-elect of the National Association for Developmental Education.

Betsy O. Barefoot is the Co-Director for Research and Publications at the National Resource Center for The Freshman Year Experience and Students in Transition at the University of South Carolina. Barefoot holds master's and doctoral degrees in higher education from the College of William and Mary. She has conducted research on first-year student programs in higher education, and edits several publications, including the *Journal of the Freshman Year Experience* and The Freshman Year Experience Monograph Series. She is a clinical faculty member in University of South Carolina's College of Education.

Robert Blanc directs the Institute for Professional Preparation at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. He works extensively with people who encounter difficulty in completing coursework or licensure examinations leading to professional certification. This work brings Blanc into contact with considerable numbers of individuals who are variously disabled, and he has developed a variety of unique testing mechanisms for assessing the extent of these disabilities. Blanc has written about what he calls the "learning disabilities of gifted adults." He has also worked extensively in the fields of undergraduate and graduate medical education, with special focus on curriculum. Prior to his appointment to the faculty of the School of Medicine, UMKC, Blanc worked in academic support roles in junior and senior high schools and at the postsecondary undergraduate level.

Beverly L. Bower is an Assistant Professor in the College of Education, Department of Educational Leadership at the University of South Carolina. She earned her Ph.D. in higher education from Florida State University. Prior to receiving her degree, she served as Learning Resources Department Head at Pensacola Junior College and was active in the Florida community college system for 12 years. She has taught French and English, both in the U.S. and abroad. At USC Bower teaches courses examining the history and philosophy of the community college, the American college student, current trends in higher education, and the principles of college teaching. Her research interests include minorities in higher education, issues related to the mission of community colleges, and the principles of college teaching.

D. David Conklin became the President of Dutchess Community College in Poughkeepsie, NY, in September 1992. Prior to going to Dutchess Community College he was at Mercer County Community College in Trenton, NJ, for 12 years, serving as Dean for Academic Affairs, Dean for Administration and Planning, and Dean for Planning and Development. He has held executive positions with the New Jersey Department of Higher Education, the State University of New York in Farmingdale, and the State University of New York at Albany. He earned his doctorate in higher education from New York University and his master's and bachelor's degrees from The Pennsylvania State University. He is listed in *Who's Who in the World*, *Who's Who in America*, and *Who's Who in Education*.

Les P. Cook currently serves as the Associate Director of Recruitment and High School Services at the University of Utah. Prior to his current position, he was employed at Salt Lake Community College where he was instrumental in the development of the new student orientation program. He has served in a number of leadership positions within the National Orientation Directors Association. Cook earned his master's and bachelor's degrees at Utah State University. He recently completed his Ph.D. in educational leadership at Brigham Young University. The title of his dissertation was *A Description of New Student Orientation Programs at Two-Year Colleges in the United States.*

Joseph B. Cuseo is an Associate Professor of Psychology and is the Director of the Freshman Seminar at Marymount College, in Rancho Palos Verdes, CA. His 1991 monograph, *The Freshman*

Orientation Seminar: A Research-Based Rationale for Its Value, Delivery, and Content, was published by the National Resource Center for The Freshman Year Experience. He currently has a monograph in preparation for publication by the Resource Center, titled, *The Freshman Orientation Seminar: Research-Based Strategies for Instructor Training, Course Pedagogy, and Course Assessment.*

Helen Tina Feiger is currently both a transfer college counselor and a professor in the Behavior Sciences Department at Santa Monica College. In her 18 years at Santa Monica College she has had many different responsibilities, including counselor for students with disabilities; counselor for international students; Director of the Women's Center; Gender Equity Grant Writer and Coordinator; Title IX Coordinator; Assistant Director of Emeritus College; and Professional Development Resource Center Coordinator. Her dissertation, *The American Community College Woman*, completed in 1991 at UCLA, was a nationally based study funded through the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

John N. Gardner is the Director of the National Resource Center for The Freshman Year Experience and Students in Transition at the University of South Carolina. He is also the Associate Vice Provost for Regional Campuses and Continuing Education. He initiated the international reform movement calling attention to what has been termed "The Freshman Year Experience." He has published widely in this field and has begun to expand its scope by focusing on students in transition and "The Senior Year Experience."

Carey E. Harbin has been an instructor and counselor at Chabot College in Hayward, CA, for over 10 years full-time and an additional 6 years as an adjunct faculty member. He designed and implemented the college orientation course at Chabot College in 1986 and continues to coordinate that program today. Harbin's background includes experience working in vocational rehabilitation, social work and secondary teaching. He earned his bachelor's degree in 1972 and master's degree in education, with a specialization in vocational rehabilitation and counseling, in 1975. Both degrees were awarded by the University of South Carolina. He is the author of the recently published handbook, *Your Transfer Planner, Strategic Tools and Guerilla Tactics* (Wadsworth, 1995), a student centered text focusing on planning and decision making in the college transfer process.

Stephanie Kadel-Taras is completing a Ph.D. in cultural foundations of education at Syracuse University. She was selected as one of 15 students to receive a Syracuse University Fellowship for Continuing Students in support of her work on her dissertation, *Always a Better Way: Making Sense of Teacher Change*. From 1993-1994 she served as a project assistant for the National Center on Postsecondary Teaching, Learning, and Assessment, and served as a research assistant for the Southeastern Regional Vision for Education from 1991-1993. She earned her bachelor's degree from Eckerd College, in St. Petersburg, FL, and her master's from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

Douglas A. Kenny is a professor in the Reading and Study Skills Department of Westchester Community College. He was responsible for initiating the College Success course at WCC and he currently serves as course coordinator. The course began its seventh year in the fall of 1994. In 1990 Kenny was named one of the nation's "Outstanding Freshman Advocates" by the National Resource Center for The Freshman Year Experience at the University of South Carolina. In 1991 he was awarded the State University of New York "Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching." He is currently the president of the WCC faculty senate.

Margaret C. (Peggy) King is Assistant Dean for Student Development at Schenectady County Community College, in Schenectady, NY. She holds an M.S. and Ed.D. from the State University of New York at Albany. A founding member of the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA), King served as Association President from 1991-1993. She is on the faculty of the NACADA Summer Institute on Academic Advising and serves as a consultant on academic advising for both two- and four-year colleges and universities. She was editor of the New Directions for Community Colleges publication, *Academic Advising: Organizing and Delivering Services for Student Success* (1993). She is a recipient of the

State University of New York Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Professional Service, the NACADA Award for Service, and the NACADA Virginia N. Gordon Award for Excellence in the Field of Advising.

Deanna C. Martin is the author of the Supplemental Instruction model. She pioneered the development and implementation of the model first with medical students in the School of Medicine at the University of Missouri - Kansas City. The program was expanded to the undergraduate program at the University. Martin earned a master's degree and Ph.D. in reading education from UMKC. She earned her bachelor's degree in English from the University of Kansas City in 1960. She serves as Director of the Center for Academic Development and holds an appointment as Associate Professor in the UMKC School of Education. Martin's publications include two books, five book chapters, nine journal articles in publications including *Academic Medicine*, the *Journal of Medical Education*, and the *Journal of Higher Education*.

Dennis McGrath is a Professor of Sociology at the Community College of Philadelphia, and is a Research Associate of the Nonprofit Management Development Center at La Salle University. He has developed and directed transfer projects funded by the Ford Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities, is currently the Director of Evaluation for the "Strengthening the Bridge" Transfer Initiative of the Philip Morris Companies, and serves as a consultant to the Ford Foundation. He has been awarded the Christian R. and Mary F. Lindback Distinguished Teaching Award. His publications on community colleges include "Toward a New Paradigm in Writing Across the Curriculum" in *New Directions for Community Colleges* (Spring, 1991), "A Professoriate Is In Trouble: And Hardly Anyone Recognizes It" *Change Magazine* (January/February, 1988) and "Sources of Resistance" *Change Magazine* (December/January, 1993).

James C. Palmer has been Assistant Professor of Educational Administration and Foundations at Illinois State University since 1992. Before joining the Illinois State University faculty, he held positions at the ERIC Clearinghouse for Community Colleges, the Center for the Study of Community Colleges, the American Association of Community Colleges, and the Center for Community College Education at George Mason University. Palmer holds an Ed.D from the University of California, Los Angeles.

Robert P. Pederson currently serves as Editor, Community College Press, for the American Association of Community Colleges. Prior to coming to the AACC, Pederson served as Interim Associate Dean for College Development at West Virginia University and Executive Director of the Community Colleges of Appalachia, Dean of Planning and Development at Wayne County Community College in Michigan, and Dean of Curriculum at El Camino College in Torrance, CA. Pederson has contributed articles and monographs to a number of community college journals and textbooks and was the senior editor of *Community College Week* between 1989 and 1995. He received his bachelor's and master's degrees from Columbia University and is presently completing a doctoral program in the history of education at Teachers College, Columbia University.

John E. Roueche is a Professor and Director of the Community College Leadership Program at The University of Texas at Austin, where he holds the Sid W. Richards Regents Chair in Community College Leadership. He has served as director of the program since 1971. He is the recipient of numerous national awards for his research, teaching, service, and overall leadership. He is the author of 29 books and more than 100 articles and monographs on the topics of educational leadership and teaching effectiveness. His most recent books include *Strangers in Their Own Land: Part-Time Faculty in American Community Colleges* (1995), *The Company We Keep: Collaboration In the Community College* (1995), and *Between a Rock and Hard Place: The At-Risk Student In the Open Door College*, all with Suanne D. Roueche. John Roueche earned his Ph.D. from The Florida State University in 1964.

Suanne D. Roueche is Director of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), an international consortium of more than 500 colleges committed to excellence

in professional development for the ultimate improvement of teaching and learning. Roueche is also a senior lecturer in the Department of Educational Administration at The University of Texas at Austin, where NISOD is based. She is the author of nine books and over 25 articles. Her most recent publication, *Between a Rock and Hard Place: The At-Risk Student In the Open Door College* (with John E. Roueche) was selected by the Public Broadcasting System as its educational book for 1994. Roueche earned her bachelor's and master's degrees from North Texas State University and her Ph.D. from The University of Texas at Austin in 1976. She is listed in *Who's Who in Women* and *Men and Women of Distinction*.

Patricia E. Russo is an Assistant Professor in the Curriculum and Instruction Department at the State University of New York at Oswego. She has served as a consultant for the Institute for Interdisciplinary Educational Studies at SUNY Oswego. Russo also worked as a Teacher Opportunity Corps (TOC) grant developer and evaluation coordinator at Oswego from 1994-1995. Coauthor of numerous articles, Russo earned her master's and bachelor's degrees at Oswego, and her Ph.D. at Syracuse University.

Vincent Tinto is a Professor of Sociology and Education at Syracuse University where he is the Chair of the University Task Force on Assessment, a committee charged with the campus-wide assessment of classroom teaching and learning. He is also responsible for the development and teaching of the doctoral research core course in the School of Education. Tinto has served as a consultant to the Pew Charitable Trusts and The Southern Education Foundation Project, and to the American Association of State Colleges and Universities. In 1991, he was the Project Director for the National Center on Postsecondary Teaching, Learning, and Assessment. He has also served on the Editorial Board of the *Journal of Higher Education*. Tinto earned his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago and his master's degree from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. At present, he has two works in progress, one a longitudinal study of the effects of collaborative learning, the other a longitudinal study of doctoral study persistence.

George B. Vaughan is a Professor of Higher Education at North Carolina State University. He was the founding director of the doctoral program in community college education at George Mason University. Prior to becoming a university professor, Vaughan served as a community college president for 17 years at two community colleges in Virginia (Mountain Empire and Piedmont Virginia). While president he was named on of the 50 most effective college presidents in the nation. He served three terms on the American Association of Community College's (AACC) Board of Directors. In 1996 he received AACC's highest award, the National Leadership Award. He is a member of the editorial board of the Educational Record and is editor of *The Community College Review*. Among Vaughan's books are *Dilemmas of Leadership: Decision Making and Ethics in the Community College*, *Issues for Community College Leaders In a New Era*, *The Community College Presidency: Leadership in Transition*, and *Pathway to the Presidency*. Vaughan earned his Ph.D. in higher education at Florida State University and his master's degree in history from Radford University.